Walking and Talking the Gendered State:
Women, Security and Authority in Karachi, Pakistan

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Introduction:

"You're too slack," public prosecutor Sheikh tells Sana. Sub-inspector Sana is second in command at a women's *thana* (police station), in Pakistan's largest city Karachi, a city of some 14.9 million people that is served by three women's "stations," small variously resourced police units supervised and manned primarily by women. Sana and I have come together to the High Court where Sana, a special investigating officer has just testified before the magistrate, and are now sitting in a tiny office where Sana has come in search of a lost file. "You lost us the case!" he yells as soon as we walk in. Sana ignores him, turning instead to one of the other men seated in the crowded office. "The accused got off because of you!" the prosecutor continues. Sana goes on ignoring him.

Sub-inspector Sana is second in command at the women's station, where she throws her weight around, telling juniors to fetch her tea and clean her desk. One time I saw Raani, a constable, polishing Sana's shoes, a task that Raani apparently found upsetting, as she kept bringing it up in discussions with me over the next few days. Sana comes and goes in the Station Head's (SHO) car, and is one of only two women at the station to have a dedicated working space. She speaks roughly to her subordinates, giving short, sharp and mocking rejoinders to their questions, making insulting remarks and jokes about their habits and appearances, "you're fat," or "tea served by your hand tastes like dirt." The first time I met her, Sana said to me, "I am so scared of Huda (the station head) that when I get constipated I just try to imagine her face, because when I think of her my shit comes out." Another time, Sana spent several hours amusing herself by asking me why I wasn't married despite my beauty. Her comments becoming more and more personal as she described my various attractive features.

But Sana suddenly looks a lot smaller in this tiny legal office, jam-packed with desks, chairs, steel-cupboards, and men, all of them public lawyers, listening intently to Sheikh's hilarious monologue about Sana's incompetence. Papers spill out of files stacked all the way to the ceiling in the dusty, smelly little room. The men sit loose-limbed behind desks, while Sana and I are squeezed on low-slung chairs, pressed in the corner, looking up at the men. In the corridor beyond the office, a teeming mass of humanity, dotted with flies, is milling around the stately, sandstone court building, left behind by the British Raj. Women are few, many covered head to toe in black

robes and veils. A smattering of unveiled lawyer women, wearing white tunics and trousers under black blazers, navigate their way through the crowds. Rough looking, unshaven men, shackled to police constables, are sprawled on the corridor floor, smoking cigarettes and spitting betel juice while they await *hazari* (presentation before the judge). The air is filled with the stench of sweat and latrines.

Sheikh scolds and berates Sana for over 20 minutes, his voice raised against the din of justice-seekers and Karachi's traffic. "You've got to pull yourself up," he tells her, "last week, your *sipahi*, (a low-ranking constable), had the temerity to question you!" he says spitting with contempt. "You should have shown her who is boss," he says, "tighten (the screws on) these rankers, otherwise they will walk all over you." His tirade is interspersed with comments on the beauty of Sana's various colleagues. "Where is Ambreen, these days?" He asks. "She is a beauty!" he croons. He names a prominent, high-ranking women officer, praising her looks and claiming to have trained her in police work. "You trained her?" Sana asks, looking very doubtful. "*Hanh* (yes), when it came upon her, I am the one who taught her law," he replies. This claim is very unconvincing; I have met the woman in question, a high ranking, well spoken, widely travelled, gazetted Civil Services officer with a background in legal training.

Sheikh changes the topic. "How's your husband?" he asks Sana in a ribbing manner, "he really loves you, Madam inspector, he's always monitoring your movements," he continues, laughing. "No one loves anyone but their mother in today's world," Sana replies. The other men snigger. "What!" Sheikh appears a bit discomfited, "No! He loves you a lot, he's always checking up on you!" he replies. "Yes, he is Sindhi (an ethnic group)," Sana counters, "as soon as they see a woman they lose their senses!" Sheikh is clearly Sindhi because at Sana's remark, all the men in the office burst into laughter, which goes on for a while. Sheikh doesn't laugh, he looks offended. Sana snaps, "that is why he can't stop his roving eye," she continues in a bitter voice, "then he gets scared and begs forgiveness." Again, all the men laugh. "Are you his first wife or his second?" Sheikh asks, referring to the local practice of polygamy. "Pray that he gets a second one," Sana replies, "I am tired of being the one and only, pray to God he gets a second," she says.

At this point, Sheikh, who has ignored me thus far, asks Sana who I am. She replies rather proudly, "this is my sister[2] she is a PhD scholar from the US, she is researching us," she says, looking somewhat smug. "Researching you?" Sheikh asks incredulously, looking around the room

at his male colleagues. He turns to me, “what could you possibly learn from her?” he guffaws, “she is a clown! And so is Huda!” All the men laugh loudly. Sana blushes and bows her head, tears fill her eyes, but she blinks them away. On the way back to the station, Sana asks me to help her get her daughter admitted to an English medium private school where she knows my mother works as a superintendent. “No matter how high the fees are,” she says, “I will pay it.” I feel sad because I know that Sana earns around 35,000 rupees ($350) a month. The fees would suck up most of her salary.

I open with this scene to highlight an interactive process and a set of themes I saw repeated in various settings during my fieldwork with women security-service workers in Karachi, Pakistan. Sheikh’s demeaning jokes and Sana’s efforts to manage them illuminate the ways that class, gender and sexuality come together to drain women’s authority and construct power as gendered within the Pakistani state. Sana, along with her friend and boss, Huda, ran a tight ship at the women’s station, their subordinates were called upon to press their clothes, polish their shoes, fetch their tea and address them respectfully as “madam.” Yet, as this episode with the public lawyers shows, the women’s authority didn’t always carry over into other official contexts. Nor were policewomen alone in having to manage encounters with interlocutors who deployed gendered ideas and images to undermine their authority within state work. In the two other state-security employment contexts I studied, airline work and community health work, I observed similar instances of degradation through interaction. In all three settings, state-employed women were doubted, humiliated, ignored and harried in various ways, not just by men, nor just by bosses but also by citizens, subordinates, as well as other women. Yet, all three occupations are government jobs, providing crucial service to the state and to its citizens.

Why are women like Sana, who provide invaluable service to the state, so degraded in its various arenas? How do they manage this denigration? And what do their contentions mean, given that these are not just service workers but also agents of the state? These specific questions connect to a bigger more theoretically significant intellectual problem. Why despite conscious efforts at gender mainstreaming by the Pakistani state, do its women agents remain concentrated at the lowest rungs of state power?

One lay Pakistani explanation I was offered in the course of my fieldwork argued that women are unable to break through the glass ceiling in state jobs because of marriage. As one journalist put it, the excuse that male officials make is that women get left behind because they are unable to offer the same

level of dedication as men, especially in security related occupations. Once they get married, women become wrapped up in their husbands and their home, their attention becomes divided and they can no longer focus on work. This explanation jibes with popular explanations for the glass ceiling in western contexts as well. Women's care giving needs stand in the way of their professional success, these popular theories suggest, women would do better if they could just "lean in," get over their various fears and put in the hours necessary to succeed at work (see for instance, Sandberg 2013). Yet, in the courthouse episode I recount above, Sheikh is the one wrapped up in Sana's home life, expressing an unprofessional curiosity about her relationship with her husband. Sana never once brought up her husband in all the time that I observed her interactions in the workplace.

In contrast with these popular theories, scholarly explanations for the glass ceiling focus on the gendered character of workplaces. Since work organizations are gendered, this line of thinking suggests, women are held back by promotion rules and performance evaluation templates that privilege men and disadvantage women. Thus, in line with Joan Acker's work (1990), this thinking suggests that the glass ceiling results because women are penalized for doing their jobs in ways that contrast with the implicitly gendered norms and expectations of their workplaces. And indeed, this thinking does partially accord with my observations. The police force, for instance, is certainly a gendered organization, not just in Pakistan but also in the west (Martin 1999). As an implicitly masculine occupation, police work therefore provides employees with only a limited (and gendered) range of scripts or performance templates they can use to demonstrate competence and secure promotion (Lippe et al. 2004). Yet, the gendered organization explanation does not explain why women's performances change in different sites and interactions. Why was Sana unable to sustain the assertive interactive style she usually adopted at the station in her interaction with Sheikh? And how does this performative inconsistency reinforce women's subordination within state jobs?

In this dissertation, I engage these questions through an in-depth examination of the experiences and routine practices of three groups of state-employed women security-service-workers charged with extending state capacity by serving and regulating women citizens in Karachi, Pakistan. Drawing on 120 interviews and hundreds of hours of field observations, I construct two specific explanations for the glass ceiling these women experience. First, I outline the symbolic problems these women face in occupying state-based security-service roles, which are understood in the Pakistani context as tainted for women. Second, I describe the relational repercussions that result from these symbolic issues. Specifically, I argue

that beyond gendered organizational scripts and templates, the glass ceiling is upheld also by the cultural and relational problem of performative mismatch. In the workplace, as in other arenas of social life, people are constrained to do gender in ways that conform to broader cultural expectations. Performances that do not accord with these expectations are read as mismatched or incongruent. As we know from gender scholarship, mismatched performances can provoke repercussions for actors deemed to be in violation of gender norms. But as I show in this dissertation, mismatched performances can create other important outcomes for workplace success, such performances can also constrain women's relational capacities, their ability to get people to buy into their self-presentations, to cooperate with their projects and aspirations and to welcome them into various networks. Performative mismatch therefore can cause women to get left behind at work in two ways, first by reinforcing a sense of their lack of fit or competency for a particular position and second by undermining their relational abilities within the social space of work.

By focusing on ways that these two mechanisms, cultural and relational, come together in performance to uphold the glass ceiling, this dissertation illuminates not only how gendered exclusion and subordination is structured in the workplace but also how power within the state comes to be constructed through interactive performance in gendered and classed ways. In what follows, I provide a brief overview of the social theories, theoretical terms and concepts that animate my discussion of women's marginalization in state work before concluding with a discussion about the broader theoretical implications of this project.

Gender, the Interaction Order and Idioms of Honor and Shame:

Feminist scholars have argued that the state is not just an abstract, macro-level organization but is also "a complex of concrete institutions with which women interact in direct and immediate ways" (Haney 1996). Thus, to understand women's subordination within state based security-service jobs we need to understand how the glass ceiling is upheld in a multi-layered and complex organization made up of myriad performances and interactions. One way this occurs in the Pakistani context is through the gendered cultural construction of these spaces and interactions as morally tainted for women.

In all three of my field sites, I learned that security service occupations are understood as contaminated for women in two ways. First, such jobs are understood as dishonorable because they

require women to violate norms of gendered propriety constricting women's interactions with strange men. Women police, health workers and airline attendants are seen as sexually and morally tainted for working shoulder-to-shoulder with men colleagues, as well as for coming in contact with sex workers and other such clients. Second, these jobs are seen as problematic for women because they involve a gendered transgression of space, an ingress into a *mahol* or environment understood as too dirty for women to occupy. In Pakistani society, spaces such as courts and police stations are deemed as unsavory environments, unsuitable for entry by decent women from good families, whose menfolk are expected to protect them from having to venture into such spaces. Such cultural constructions, which problematize certain spaces and interactions for women not only work to limit their entry into these fields but also constrain their interactive capacities within them.

Women's performances in these organizational settings and interactions are constrained therefore, not just because organizations encode masculine norms and expectations within written policies and templates but also because of the tacit moral expectations encoded within what Goffman refers to as the interaction order (Goffman 1988). The interaction order is composed of environments and interactants, which combine to help actors generate performances. Performance is the raw material of an interaction; it is through performative presentations that actors work to define the meaning of a particular social situation for their audiences and interlocutors. For state agents involved in security work, these performances must underscore an actor's authority. But as gender scholars have remarked, performance can never escape gender (West and Zimmerman 1987). Women occupying state agent roles therefore remain accountable to gender norms surrounding both environments and interactants. When they violate these norms, women disturb the interaction order, provoking two kinds of *gendered authority threats*, internal ones comprising reprisals and reactions from their co-workers, bosses and subordinates, and external ones involving doubt and retaliation from the citizens that these women are tasked with disciplining and serving.

Gendered authority threats, as I conceptualize them, comprise challenges to an actors' definition through performance of the meaning of a social situation. To accomplish this definition, actors need others to buy into their presentations. When interlocutors refuse to cooperate with an actor's presentation, when they harass or mock the women incumbents of a public position, that refusal of recognition constitutes a gendered threat to women's authority, disrupting her performance. Having a performance doubted is akin to losing face; it humiliates and dishonors an actor.

In the chapters that follow, I describe how women manage these threats by enacting a range of

what I describe as *congruent performances*, self-presentations that jibe with the broader social norms and cultural expectations surrounding actors and environments, such as the circumscribed cosmopolitanism of the flight attendants, the martial motherhood of the lady health workers and the *purdah* aesthetics of most women police officers. By undertaking congruent performances, women seek to sanitize their reputations and also to accomplish various relational outcomes. Yet, as I show, these performances, ironically wind up limiting both women's symbolic and relational capacities. To expand their agency in their professional workplaces, women would need to enact what I refer to as *incongruent performances*, such as Sana's brutal aesthetics, which violated cultural ideas about fit or accord between actor and setting. But these performances, as I show in the following chapters, are unavailable to most women for various reasons. In the chapters that follow I outline the various ways these processes unfold in each of my field sites and discuss implications of these mechanics for feminist state theory.

Security Service Work and the Outlay of Intangible Labor

The choice of state-based security-service fields was not merely incidental but theoretically motivated. All three sites investigated as part of this project are in the Pakistani context, government jobs, a sector of employment that feminists consider to be an especially important site of gender mainstreaming for two reasons. First, women's integration into state jobs, feminist scholars argue, not only serves to expand feminist political possibilities within the state but also helps mitigate the gendered, masculinist character of the state (Ehrenreich 1987, Piven 1990, see also Haney 1996, Walby 2005). For instance, research has found that increased gender diversity within a state's legislative body is accompanied by a greater overall focus on women's issues, and that this benefit holds even in those cases where the gender balance within an assembly is extremely skewed. Even when the proportion of women in state legislatures is very low, women are generally more active than men in sponsoring legislation that focuses on women's interests (Bratton 2005).

Second, noted for bureaucratic standards of policy and transparency, states are usually considered model employers, attaining exemplary levels of employment equality and workplace diversity. Public jobs, therefore, are understood as crucial avenues of class mobility and economic security for women and people of color in industrialized nations. In Pakistan also, government jobs are in general, highly coveted opportunities, providing employees with benefits, such as job security, pensions and healthcare that in a

neoliberal era characterized by job uncertainty, are seen as especially unusual and precious. Indeed, many of the women employed in the tainted occupations I studied were motivated to overcome their gendered reservations against these positions precisely because these were the only government jobs they had been able to get.

By focusing on service work within the state, however, this dissertation complicates some of the scholarly assumptions around gender, class mobility and the state. Specifically, by focusing on the symbolic and relational contentions women put at the disposal of state service work, this project sheds light on some of the similarities between states and capitalist markets. Both arenas appropriate the intangible, often gendered, symbolic and relational competencies of their employees to further various organizational agendas, such as profit or policy objectives. Neither arena recognizes or rewards their employees' interactive outlays.

From this view then, the integration of women in various state arenas of employment doesn't just entail greater political participation for women, it also helps furnish further vectors for the exploitation of working-class women through work. Indeed, as Wendy Brown (1992) suggests, the state doesn't simply employ staff, it also "produces state subjects as bureaucratized, dependent, disciplined and gendered." In short, women state employees, Brown suggests, do not help emancipate compulsory motherhood, but instead help administer it. And they do this by putting more and more of their gendered cultural competencies and labors at the state's disposal. Yet, their outlays are not too frequently considered in the scholarship through the lens of labor. Since the service-work literature usually thinks of the "advancing commodity frontier" as a capitalist project (Hochschild 2004), it tends to focus on private sector workers' strategies for managing the exploitative aspects of an encroaching market place. But, as I show in the following chapters, state employed service workers too must grapple with the increasingly invasive requirements of work. In state based contexts, also, women must put more and more of their psychic, connective and aesthetic capacities at the disposal of an employer who neither rewards nor recognizes their outlays. How do women manage this encroachment? What can their efforts tell us about the transforming equations of gender, power and the state in a contemporary era?

To explore and theorize women's efforts to manage these moral and relational problems my dissertation integrates theories of service-work and performance to scrutinize women's agency within the state. More specifically, in what follows, I show how a gendered interactive order organized around idioms of honor and shame shapes women's professional performances and their relational capacities in ways that

ultimately wind up undermining their relational capacities and deflating their authority, even within the policy-driven context of a bureaucratic state.

Visibilizing Women:

Apart from an investigation into the mechanics of exclusion and authority, this project works also to shed light on an understudied global context. Precisely because these women are vilified for their work, their concerns and feelings, their quotidian struggles and hardships are not frequently brought out into the public sphere. In the pages that follow I provide an account of the feelings and contentions of working class Pakistani women as they surmount sizeable obstructions to their economic and political empowerment and withstand stigma in service to the state's security projects. To complete their assigned duties women, have to manage domestic responsibilities, childcare, economic need and professional responsibility as they navigate a sprawling, metropolis and a public space hostile to women. Unsurprisingly, the women evince tremendous angst as they wrestle to grab for their siblings or children the middle-class status that has eluded them, even as they sense that opportunities for upward mobility are on the wane and standards for upwardly mobile jobs on the rise. Few of these women had planned to work, those that did so plan had thought that their educational qualifications would guarantee them esteemed positions in the workforce but instead found themselves in devalued and stigmatized jobs. Sania, a 25-year-old police constable feels let down by the false promise of an education-fuelled mobility. Particularly offended by the demand that she coerces confessions through violence, Sania is seeking dignity through further study. She gets by on 4 hours of sleep a night as she balances police work with medical school, childrearing, and housework, hoping to secure a more respectable medical job by ignoring the toll this balancing act takes on her health, "a person can do anything," she says, "if she has no choice."

Evincing the sense that patriarchy is no longer able to discharge its end of the bargain, women feel hemmed in by gendered accountability regimes and let down by men. 50 year old health worker Mumtaz feels her body is on its last legs, massaging her knees as she speaks, she says she starts the day by popping pills to support the legwork she must do to ensure no child within her circuit goes without the polio vaccine. She calls her husband a *hadharam* (lazybones) but still feels gratitude towards him for allowing her to push through the biggest project of her life unimpeded. Since she has only one daughter, this project was the quest for security through the purchase of a modest home, which she refers to as "my son," because house ownership allays her fears that her lack of a son would leave her shelter-less in the event of

her husband's death.

The three cases of boundary-spanning women examined in this dissertation provide a rare opportunity to bear witness to the ways in which women draw on cultural resources in their efforts to get past accountability regimes, and their attempts to generate new performances in a set of gendered settings where the range of available performances are deemed unsuitable for women's use.

CHAPTER 1:
Mavens of Mobility: Airline Women, Cosmopolitan Cultural Capital and Dependency

A few months into my fieldwork at a casual lunch with high school friends I was the recipient of a sneer, "I can't understand how you can work with such dirty women," a US educated former classmate said of my work with flight attendants. But elite and middle-class actors like my friend are not the only

ones to hold such negative views of PIA women. Airline attendants I met told me of several similarly shaming encounters, not just with strangers but also with passengers, friends, and even family members. "This job is not considered a decent job for women to do," Sehr, an attendant with some 20 years of flying experience said. Airhostesses, as they are called in Pakistan, complained that passengers seemed to feel entitled to ogle them, pass rude comments, and even at times to take photographs or make videos of airline attendants without their consent. Zara said her fiancé disliked her job so much he was adamant she quit when they got married. Reham said her brothers were so angry with her when she joined PIA that she had had to move out of her family home and take up residence in the PIA hostel. "They've thawed a bit now" she said, "but I keep my contact with them to a minimum, like right now one of them is getting married, and I am not attending the wedding, only the after-wedding reception. I just said to my family that I couldn't get time off, even though I do have some leave I could take. I just don't want to go." Meanwhile, Farah reported harassment at the hands of a neighborhood gas station, the attendants she said, deliberately flattened all her car tires while she was inside the store; they did so, she thought, because they knew she was a hostess and therefore felt she deserved to be harassed.

Despite this negative image, airhostessing jobs are also seen as very desirable opportunities. When Safiya, a Lady Police Constable (official designation) I met through fieldwork, learned I was also studying flight attendants, she begged me to help her get a PIA job, "I'll do anything," she said. I asked her why she would give up her police job for such demanding work and she replied, "they get to go out of the country, and they look pretty, and they dress nice, and their salary is good, and it was just always my dream since I was child to fly like that." Her description accorded with what I heard from a seven-year-old child at a working-class boxing club in one of Karachi's most depressed working-class neighborhoods, Lyari. After the girls had finished their boxing class, I asked the littler ones what they wanted to be when they grew up. Sania, a petite young girl with wiry hair piped up, "PIA airhostess!" Taking a cue from her, some of the other girls also started chanting, "hostess, hostess!" I asked Sania what she liked about the airhostessing job and she replied, "They are pretty and they are kind and they go out (of the country)!"

While some people might think they are dirty, promiscuous or "loose", for working-class girls and women, airhostesses represent a dream of literal mobility, a chance to rise above their working-class situations and to travel abroad. Airline attendants make something like three times the salary policewomen with comparable educational qualifications make. And while cops are at times constrained to travel to rural or dangerous locales, often on overcrowded buses, to stand for hours in the hot sun, and to deal with those

accused of prostitution, theft and murder, airline women work primarily in contexts that are air-conditioned and secure and they travel to places like Toronto and London, where that are put up at luxury hotels. Police women rarely have access to drinking water at work, and they have to pay for tea or food out of their own pockets. But airline women receive generous travel allowances, paid in US dollars, which they often spend on treats such as designer make up, purses and shoes. Airline women therefore are able to consume experiences and products that are quite simply beyond the reach of most working-class girls. Yet, the same spatial mobility that makes flying a dream job for working-class girls also spoils airline women's image and identity. It is precisely because they fly long distances, alone and without chaperones, spending nights away from home, and serving hundreds and hundreds of strange men, that airline women are seen as dirty.

How do airline attendants balance these complicated moral and material pressures? How do they navigate a job that in addition to being physically, aesthetically and emotionally demanding also imposes upon workers the spoiled identity (Goffman 1963) of "dirty women?" What kinds of performances do they undertake to address this denigration? And how do their contentions shape the broader relational dynamics in this state-anchored field of work?

To manage the stigma surrounding their jobs, I found that airline attendants manage symbolic and relational challenges by enacting a performance I call **circumscribed cosmopolitanism**, a set of discursive, aesthetic and interactive performances that draw on the cultural and material capital acquired through work-travel to signal airline women's distinction, constructing them as culturally superior to those who would stigmatize them. Such people, they claim, lack sophistication, a character flaw that is indexed by their shabby appearance and their unsophisticated attitudes towards women. By enacting cosmopolitan identities, airline women instrumentalize global inequalities, marshaling the Islam-west binaries that point to gender ideological differences as evidence of Muslim backwardness to manage the taint imposed upon their identities by local ideals of gender. Yet, the cosmopolitanism women enacted was of a circumscribed kind. The performance was dropped, as I show in this chapter, in women's interactions with their male colleagues. In these interactions, women enacted more conventional gender performances, seeking guidance from male colleagues, deferring to men's ideas and opinions and turning to them for help managing professional problems and relationships. This switch from cosmopolitan to deferential performances, I argue, allowed airline women to keep two distinct relational objectives simultaneously in play.

Cosmopolitan performances helped women to disconnect from those who would cast them as dirty, while deferential performances allowed them to cement a patriarchal pact with their male colleagues, recruiting these men to women's various personal and professional objectives.

Cultural Capital and Work:

Two sets of literature describe the ways that work can be a conduit for the acquisition of new cultural competencies. The first, focused on workers' emotional displays and presentations, describes ways that workplaces work to regulate employees' emotional and interactive displays. According to this literature, employers rely on scripts and training techniques to ensure workers bring their outward displays in line with "feeling rules." Feeling rules are norms of expression that define what kinds of emotional displays are appropriate to particular social situations (Hochschild 1983). Employers calibrate workers' emotions to the corporate context in order to produce apposite responses and reactions in customers (Hochschild 1983) and in doing so, generate profit.

A second literature describing how work reshapes workers' cultural competencies focuses on the concept of "aesthetic labor." This literature focuses on the broader symbolic effort employers make to refashion employee's bodies in pursuit of profit (Gottfried 2003; Mears 2014; Warhurst and Nickson 2007; Williams 2006; Williams and Connell 2010). In order to ensure profit for employers, workers must "look good and sound right" (Warhurst and Nickson 2009). To ensure workers accomplish these suitable performances, employers rely on corporate manuals, training programs, and employment practices to refine workers' speech and appearance in accordance with a corporation's desired image.

In the course of undertaking emotional labor and aesthetic labor, employees come to acquire new affective and interactive competencies, or in other words, they gain access to new forms of cultural capital. The cultural capital that employers typically favor is one that reflects their client base. Studies focused on global contexts suggest that a particular form of cultural capital – western, middleclass, and often white in composition – is gaining increasing currency globally (Otis 2016). In her research on luxury hotels in China, for instance, Otis (2016) found that globalized companies don't just use training programs to streamline and refine their workers' existing cultural capital reserves, but instead, unmake and replace prior forms of acquired cultural capital in order to match employees' skills with their clients' capacities. For instance, Otis' research participants, local workers at a luxury Chinese hotel, were required to suppress previously acquired "Maoist gender styles" and ideals and instead take on westernized forms of

femininity in order to shore up western male guests' feelings of competence and masculine superiority in these non-western hospitality settings. In emulating and deploying tastes and styles reflective of their guests' cultural capital, Otis argues, hotel employees had to accommodate to what she calls "cosmopolitan capital" a privileged form of cultural capital, possessed by white, middle class travellers, who set the standard for emotion and body rules wherever they go, and therefore need not worry about acquiring competencies with local languages, manners or practices, even when they travel.

Yet, by seeing "cosmopolitan capital" through the lens of privilege, Otis overlooks ways that such cosmopolitan cultural competencies may be a resource for workers. Indeed, the broader literature on emotion and aesthetic labor tends to see cultural capital acquired through work as functioning primarily to benefit not workers but employers or corporations, who translate this unseen capital into profit for the organization. Employees, in this line of thinking, are typically seen as the exploited party in two ways. First, since a great deal of what employees dispense as part of their labor is invisible (i.e. emotion work) it is not translated into wages, even though it generates profit. And since people often already possess at least some knowledge about the feeling rules that organize interaction within their culture, employers can depend on workers to already possess some of the cultural capital needed to appropriately serve customers. This pre-existing competency makes workers more easily replaceable, and therefore disposable for the corporation. Even in the Chinese context Otis studies, employees are not understood to gain benefits, such as seniority, or increased salary, through their newly acquired cultural competencies.

Yet, there is reason to believe that workers may see the acquisition of elite forms of cultural competencies through work as a useful resource. For instance, Sherman (2005) discusses ways that hotel concierges draw on their knowledge of elite lifestyles (of luxury goods, the arts and restaurants) to cast themselves as superior, not just to other employees but also to less well off, less sophisticated guests. Indeed, cosmopolitanism, in particular, is usually understood as a privileged form of cultural capital not only because it suggests an ease in moving across borders, (i.e. through access to privileged passports and credit cards (see Calhoun 2008) but also because cosmopolitanism relies on expensively acquired omnivorous capacities (in taste, knowledge of diverse customs, cuisines and gender interaction codes) that are usually possible to cultivate only through expensive travel and elite education programs (Igarashi and Saito 2014). Since they are expensive and therefore typically hard to acquire, the omnivorous capacities implied by cosmopolitan kinds of cultural capital are therefore seen as making for "a new kind of distinction" (Lizardo, 2005), and a new basis of exclusion (Germann Molz, 2012; Lizardo, 2005). Given

this symbolic importance of cosmopolitan cultural capital as a marker of distinction and elite status, it is not unreasonable to expect employees to see the cosmopolitan competencies provided by their jobs as a resource.

Circumscribed Cosmopolitan and the dualistic relational agendas of Airline Women:

In what follows, I show how airline women deploy cosmopolitan cultural capital acquired through work to manage the stigma surrounding their job. Yet, as I show, this cosmopolitanism is of a circumscribed kind, deployed only in specific contexts and for particular purposes. In other words, women pick up and put down these performances in line with their relational needs. They deploy cosmopolitanism to distance themselves from those who vilify them for transgressing gendered cultural codes, a modality I refer to as disconnective performance, one aimed at creating distance between airline women and some of their interlocutors. But in their interactions with male colleagues, women dropped cosmopolitan styles and did gender in more conventional ways. By enacting a more deferential mode in these interactions, they reproduced the same gendered inequalities in their work relationships that they disavowed through their cosmopolitan presentations.

The pursuit of a circumscribed cosmopolitanism, I argue, reveals the contrasting relational agendas airline women seek through their performances. While scholars usually understand performance as a vehicle of symbolic agency—focusing on the kinds of displays people put up in their efforts to confirm or repudiate gender norms, the airline women's toggling between distinct genres of gender suggest that performance is also a medium of relational contention. Enacting cosmopolitanism allows these women to distance themselves from problematic interlocutors, but a circumscription of this cosmopolitanism also allows women to simultaneously pursue a different, more conventional relational agenda with regards to their male colleagues. By seeking counsel from male colleagues, deferring to men's ideas and opinions, and turning to men for help managing professional problems and relationships, women sought to recruit these men as agents or go-betweens to act for them in furthering various personal and professional ends. Thus, by enacting a circumscribed cosmopolitanism, airline women balanced the class-gender contradictions posed by their work. They simultaneously signified their fidelity to gendered norms while symbolically rejecting these norms as backward. This performative flipflop also served a relational purpose, allowing women to pursue two different relational agendas, to connect with male colleagues but

also to disengage from problematic interlocutors who disparage women for their stigmatized jobs.

The Sources of Airline Women's Stigma:

The stigmatization of airline jobs for women stems from a combination of social and institutional factors. Class and gender issues combine to give airhostesses a bad name. On the one hand gender norms code women's work as problematic, as Nazli, a 40-year-old airline attendant with 22 years of service to her credit explained, "a hostess job is not seen as okay in our society because the society in which we work is still very male dominated," and therefore, "if a girl steps out into (the world) for any job, then she is categorised as fast or loose." On the other, class problems compound gender issues. Since airline work constrains women to engage in gendered interactions with vast numbers of non-kin men, to travel far from home without chaperones and to stay out overnight women's willingness to to take on such stigmatizing work is taken to imply gross financial need, connecting airline women to impoverished or low-class family backgrounds, deprived of male guardianship and financial support.

These image problems are compounded by the deteriorating image of PIA. Nazli, who began working at the airline in the 1990s, complains, "back then it was, we could call it a golden era of PIA," she says. "When I joined, it was still, it was, like this," using her hand to indicate an upward graph trend, "and now it's totally…" she tilts her palm downward to indicate a nosedive. When I ask her in what way the airline has deteriorated, she explains, "It was elite, at the time, meaning, the facilities, the quality of the staff, the class of the passengers, the routes we flew, the layovers we got, the rest time we were allowed." She sighs, continuing: "we had very good allowances, we got quite a bit of respect." But these golden days are long over. Roshan, a 50-year-old attendant, agrees, "after that the downfall kept coming, government influence [i.e. political interference] kept increasing, and the quality went down."

Political interference contributes to the stigma problem for airline women in two ways. First, as Bee argues, interference led to de-professionalization. As an example, Bee recounts her experiences when she interviewed for the PIA position, five years ago. "When I came for my first interview, they (the recruiters) really liked me because I had done a business degree, so I knew how to give an interview, I knew what a CV is, so I made a very good impression on them," she says, assuring me, "I am not just boasting, but I am telling you this as you must have heard by now that political influence has become a big problem in PIA." I asked her how that was connected to CVs, and she replied, "In fact, very strange and

weird type of people were getting inducted into the organization at the time, because the political party in power at the time would push for them to be hired." I asked her what she meant by "strange and weird," and she explained, "it was like this, when they (the recruiters) saw someone like me, they really would appreciate it. They said, 'you are the first one to come with a CV, otherwise no one has that concept at all, and you know how to give an interview, how to dress, sit, talk like a professional, the others are not like that.'"

When airline attendants would refer to political appointees as weird and strange, I at first assumed this was the class prejudice of urban, big city, working-class women against poor rural or small-town workers appointed in an effort at affirmative action by a state aiming to provide class mobility opportunities to a broader swath of the population. This assumption angered airline women when I brought it up with them. Tara, a 50-year-old senior bursar, complained that by thinking this way I was failing to recognize corruption. "The girl who was caught shoplifting in Toronto," was a political appointee, she told me, referring to a highly publicised case of a PIA airline attendant who was nabbed by Canadian police for shoplifting luxury items in a mall. I told Tara that I had met the girl the day before, when she reported she had been dismissed from PIA without trial. "She was devastated," I said. "Nonsense," Tara said, "she'll never be dismissed, I can tell you that." I said I had been told in the office also that she had been dismissed, and Tara argued, "If they're saying it," she paused, took a deep breath and continued, "But it doesn't happen. The airline is getting a bad name, but they will still try to keep such [political] types safe [from disciplinary action]." We began to talk of other things but after a few minutes, Tara brought up the shoplifting case again, "even if she is put on trial and her act is confirmed, they still won't dismiss her. She'll come back, you watch and see. That's what I'm saying." I asked if this was a form of job security provided by the airline, and she replied, "No, because a phone call will come from the President House or the Prime Minister House or some Minister or Senator or other big shot, someone will do something. Someone from the board of directors will rescue her. That's how things are done here."

Such notions of corruption were not restricted to PIA employees. I heard such conversation outside of PIA too, amongst friends and acquaintances and on the media. Accusations of corruption and venality came up each time an airline attendant ran into the law. One young woman was charged with smuggling while I was doing fieldwork and two with shoplifting. And even the cops I worked with would say with a grin that "those girls" always find a way to get off, "they have boyfriends, so powerful, you won't believe," they told me.

Contesting Stigma: Circumscribed Cosmopolitanism:

To manage this pollution of their identities, airline women draw on the unique affordances of their jobs to construct what I term, circumscribed cosmopolitanism, a set of discursive and aesthetic performances that draw on the cultural and material capital acquired through work-travel to signal airline women's distinction, constructing them as culturally superior to those who would stigmatize them. While scholars usually understand performative styles to be aimed at activating networks and fostering connection (see Bedi 2016), circumscribed cosmopolitanism is aimed at disconnection instead. Circumscribed cosmopolitanism draws on othering global cultural discourses, which focus particularly on gender practices, such as veiling to reinforce arguments about the cultural backwardness of non-Western, especially Islamic settings (see Abu-Lughod 1998). By crafting a cosmopolitan appearance redolent of western beliefs and attitudes around gender, airline women appropriate these global discourses for their own ends. By emphasizing their own cosmopolitan competencies, airline women suggested that those who vilify them for transgressing gendered cultural codes are possessed with a problematic mindset. Casting such people as ignorant and unaware, airline women presented themselves in contrast as more evolved, more educated and more competent. These superior qualities, airline women argued, were demonstrated through both their more cultured appearances and their more cultivated subjectivities. Casting themselves as agentic, independent, self-sufficient and organized, airline women constructed an image of their distinctiveness in contrast with "ordinary" Pakistani women.

The Distinctiveness of Mobility:

Airline women manage stigma by redeploying the very mobility that tarnishes their reputation, as a signifier of distinction. Instead of the dirty experiences and encounters imagined by outsiders, airline employees argue that frequent travel to foreign locales provides them with a sophisticated "awareness" that goes beyond mere educational degrees and credentials. This experiential knowledge, combined with the wages and payments associated with travel-work, permit women to engage in consumptive practices that they argue reflect a cosmopolitan reflexivity: the ability to choose rather than reproduce a lifestyle received from their parents or culture. Meanwhile, exposure to a vast volume of people and the experience acquired through the repeated management of these interactions, women say, provides them with a perceptiveness and self-control that makes them uniquely competent at managing themselves. Together

these two benefits of their job – the mobility and the interactive competence it generates – allow airline women to perform a cosmopolitan subjectivity, one that encompasses freedom, agency and self-sufficiency, setting airline women apart from "ordinary girls".

Redefining Mobility: Airline women address the gender and class stigmas associated with their work by redefining the meaning of their mobility; rather than an impediment to women's modesty, mobility provides women with unique access to freedom and security. While most people assume that the travel imposed upon women in this line of work makes them vulnerable to strangers' advances and assaults, Nazli argues that being in perpetual motion actually makes for increased security at work. "If I worked in an office, I would have a boss," she says. "Now suppose, my boss was not alright, if he was not a decent person, still every day I would have to put up with him. Daily I would have to listen to him. There would be no escape." By working airline jobs, women argued, they moved amongst a constantly changing set of people, making it difficult for anyone to take advantage of the familiarity fostered by daily interaction to impose unwanted intimacy upon them. Moreover, as Rida, a 27-year-old airline attendant, argued, although women were moving great distances from home, they moved primarily within secured environments. "In the plane, see if I was working in an office, then one man can hit on you with lecherousness. But when 400 passengers are travelling along with you, okay, sometimes it does happen that one will try to come on to you, but they hesitate also, they worry that if she snubs me, in front of all these people, it will be insulting for me. So, you see, it is up to me, if I want to get with him, I can encourage his advances, but if not, he can't exceed the line, therefore, it's a safe job, safer than office jobs, where women have to face the same people all the time."

Besides the safety of an airplane packed with bystanders, women say they are also freed from the ordinary cares confronting workingwomen by the luxurious settings of their work. "From the airport, we go to the hotel, the airline puts me up in 5-star hotels, where there is full security for me, and no one can enter my room – until and unless I permit them to do so," Bee says. The luxurious setting and the safety provides for a feeling of freedom and tranquillity. Seema remarks, "With this job I get to go to America[1], which otherwise, I wouldn't be able to afford. But (working) here, we get to go, at least once every two months, she says, "when we go there, PIA puts us up for a four-day stay, then we roam around; there is

[1] PIA has since discontinued its New York operations.

where we get our enjoyment, our down time to rest and relax. ... What I mean is: that is how you become normal, like if you are fed up because of some family issue, you get alone time so you can become normal again, regain mental equilibrium, get free of the stress and tension that family and domestic issues cause." In a similar vein, Sana says, "Like here (in Karachi) right now, if I am feeling bored, I cannot go out alone. If I do go out and sit alone, like on a bench, passersby will stare at me curiously. This is a big issue in our Pakistan. But abroad, wherever you sit, whatever you do, there is peace."

This sense of unfettered freedom to do as they please provides women with a sense of dignity. Zara says, "There is a lot of freedom as well. I can go anywhere I like and no one can ask me where I am going, or what I am going to do. The only requirement PIA places on me is that I have to be available in time for my flight. So, you can do it with dignity also, you can do it your own way."

Distinction through Consumption, and Taste: The luxurious trappings of the job provide a shield not only against gender-based stigmas, but also against classed ones. Travel abroad exposes women to sites and vistas they can utilize as a symbolic counter against the middle-class degrees and credentials they lack. Mona, for instance, argues, "it's a very good job, you get to learn, see and explore the world in such a way, what I say is that even billionaires can't manage the education we get." Indeed, airhostesses say their jobs have provided them with a "real education." In contrast to book learning, which may be forgotten over time, personal experience is ineradicable. "See," Nazli argues, "it's not necessary that all education comes through books. What you see from your eyes, that thing you can never get anywhere else. In the way that to this day, I cannot forget the blooming time of the tulip garden." I asked her what she meant and she said, "It's in Amsterdam. When I went there the tulips were in bloom, so I was lucky, and to this day I remember it, how amazing it was, so I haven't been able to forget it." Like Nazli, other women also brought up the exclusive sites and vistas their jobs had enabled them to experience. "Now that I have decided to reduce my flights," Sarah says, "I have to say that I miss the cherries of Damascus, I miss the pyramids of Egypt, I miss the Black Sea of Jordan, I miss Rome's Venice." By bringing up these exotic locales in everyday conversation, airline women assert their distinction from "ordinary" Pakistani women.

International flights not only provide women with opportunities for seeing and experiencing otherwise inaccessible locales but also provide a capacity for consumption that is out of the ordinary for working-class and even middle-class women. For instance, Rida had been telling me about the financial hardships, such as sick husbands or dead fathers, that had pressed some of her colleagues to take on paid

work. I said, everyone has a *majboori* (financial constraint) of one kind or another and she laughed replying, "but this a very good constraint, you are getting such a good exposure, and such good pay, so I think it's a very good job, why not? Do it!" I asked her what the pay was like and she replied, "So you can say that a person who is doing full-fledge flights, 80-90 hours, and has accumulated about 5 years of experience, that person can make between 100,000-150,000 rupees ($1000-1500) per month. Now bear in mind many of these girls are just high school graduates, so it's very good that they get this kind of salary, who else will keep them at that rate, you tell me[2]?"

The salaries and allowances permit women to engage in consumption practices otherwise out of reach for working-class women. "I am the kind of person," Zara says, "If I am in Paris, I feel I should go see the Eiffel tower, I should see Champs Elysees, maybe purchase something, so I can say I bought something in Paris. So, this is an educational experience, I try out the local cuisine at least, so I can know what their food is like, so this is educating you." In addition to acquiring knowledge and taste through their travels, women also gain access to symbolic capital through expensive purchases. Seema, for instance, told me that she rarely shops in Pakistan, since schedules are so hectic, she says, "What we do about shopping is that whenever we go outstation (abroad), so we do our shopping from there." Similarly, Reema told me that she has become accustomed to purchasing even ordinary grocery items like bread, juice and cookies from abroad. "There are very few things we buy here, crew families are now in the habit of eating foreign sweets, even fruit." Besides edibles, women say they like to buy designer bags, sunglasses, watches and shoes and perfumes.

These forms of consumption provide an important signal of distinction for airline women. Sarah for instance, argued that a sense of style was an important marker of "awareness," or sophistication. By seeing "the world" and meeting "different kinds of people," a PIA woman, she argued, "becomes an international figure," she cannot be "compared to an ordinary girl," who "teaches, or works in a bank," she argued. A PIA woman's mental approach," her "mental level is totally different, if we talk, have a conversation, our mental level, always, will be at a higher level, because we've seen the world, we've seen different cultures, meaning in every way," When I asked her to elaborate, she brought up physical appearances, saying that people in other countries followed a decorum. "Where are you from, Fauzia?" she asked me. I replied that I lived in Virginia. She replied by saying that in those countries, people have a

[2] Police women with comparable education made Rs. 25,000 (US$ 250) per month.

sense of decorum, "they follow a code of dignity, in the way they dress," she said. "In our case, people do as they wish, some will wear a *shalwar* (a baggy local trouser) that is too high around the ankles," she complained. "The idea, or sense of looking finished and polished, doesn't exist here." When I asked her what she meant, she explained:

> See if you go to outside countries, to places like casinos etc. they have established dress codes there, like they'll say, 'you can't wear jeans etc.' now this happens in Pakistan also, in places like the Golf Club, they have a dress code too, you're not allowed to wear slippers, jeans, or joggers, so, I suppose it's coming here too, that sense of style, awareness of fashion is coming here too, but if you see airline women, they are very well groomed.

By speaking of spaces such as casinos, golf clubs, with attendant dress codes of which "ordinary" Pakistanis had no awareness, Sarah is marking airline women as distinct, more sophisticated in appearance and knowledge of navigating elite spaces.

In keeping with Sarah's aesthetic argument, airline women appeared to be very careful about their appearance. Unlike policewomen or health workers, airline women never wore headscarves. Their hair always appeared to be blow-dried. When out of uniform, they wore recognizably branded Pakistani clothes, paired with fine purses and heels. Airline women carried large smart phones, wore chunky, flashy watches, many seemed to own expensive looking sunglasses, and spoke about branded perfumes, mascaras and lipsticks. Laila, for instance, laughed as she told me that the famous artist who conducted their recent make-up training workshop had encouraged them to buy *Kryolan TV stick,* a foundation used by television professionals, "but I think I will stick to Bobbi Brown," she said to me, implying her own standards were higher than those of a renowned Pakistani stylist. In a similar light-hearted manner, Seema joked with me that the make-up allowance PIA provided "couldn't even cover the cost of one nail polish, I mean the kind that we wear."

Interactive Competence as Sign of Self Control: The customer service aspect of airline work, women argue, has led to a transformed interactive style that distinguishes them from "ordinary" Pakistani women, who conform to local gender norms by adopting more modest modes. Seema, for instance,

recounts an episode when she experienced cultural clash around local gender norms discouraging women from adopting an outgoing style of interaction.

> Like, in our Pakistan, we have this norm that girls should not talk too much, so like when I went out to eat to *Do Darya* (a local restaurant by the creek), with my fiancée. So as is my habit, without hesitation, I'm instructing the waiters, I'm telling them don't do it this way, do it that way, tell chef to cook it like this, not like that, and my fiancé is staring at me aghast, when the waiter leaves my fiancé says, 'I am here, right? I can do the talking, why are you doing the talking?'

She laughs and explains, "Actually, we have become so accustomed, I don't mean, I'm not saying we do something wrong, but we have so much passenger dealing under our belt, I've got into the habit," of being outgoing, "and that causes problems sometimes."

Like Seema, several airline women claim that their frequent dealing with droves of passengers has provided them with a cosmopolitan interactive style, one that, in contrast with Pakistani women's modes, is outgoing, firm, efficient and in control. Afshan says,

> From what I've seen, we crew have this habit that even if a random stranger, a passerby is falling, tripping, we'll plunge forward with 'Oh, you didn't get hurt did you? You are okay, aren't you?' I mean, customer dealing has seeped so deep within us now that we tend to forget that this is not how things are done here. Such behavior is not disliked in foreign countries but it is disliked in Pakistan, this is something that I have noted a lot."

I ask her if such outgoing behavior is frowned upon when men do it, and she replies, "It is disliked only for ladies. They don't mind that much if men are outgoing, as they mind it with the ladies." I ask her what people dislike about aiding a tripping stranger, and she replies, "they say things like, look at her, she is uselessly taking tension on his behalf, she should mind her own business, why should it matters to her if someone falls or not."

Besides an outgoing style, airline work, women say, has provided them with an interactional style that is efficient and controlled. Mehreen, a 35-year-old attendant says, "The main thing about this job is that you learn to manage yourself very nicely. Like, we give service, we do it within the time frame of one hour, right?" She says, explaining that each crewmember has fifty passengers under them. "You have to handle feeding fifty passengers in one hour. And managing the tempo of interactions like that, it teaches you everything." When I ask her to give me an instance, she says,

> Learning, like if you fly two or three times, and have the ability within yourself, you will learn how to keep yourself firm. If you speak firmly to someone, then that person also speaks to you from a distance, if you don't speak with them firmly, if you don't have knowledge of your job, you have lack of knowledge or if you speak to them in a casual attitude, then they too will speak to you in a casual attitude which may create problems that you will have to face.

To avoid such problems, women say, they have acquired a perceptiveness built from experience. Bee was telling me that one of the hazards of being a woman in this line of work is that "many people try to approach us (i.e. flirtatiously), so if we are even a little bit weak, then take it that people start approaching us like flies," I asked her what she meant by "approaching," and she said she was talking about flirting.

> See there are all kinds of people here, desperate ones, educated ones, so if you know how to leverage someone's desperation, so if a man is showing you gold-tinged dreams, so any girl can fall under the spell of his words, if she doesn't have will power. people just do try to butter you up with their talk, they try to flirt, but thank God we have acquired enough perception to realize who is serious and who is flirting."

These perception skills are important because many single women think of marriage as a longer-term exit strategy, a way to get out of flying. Roshan, a striking 25-year-old flight attendant told me that she

was serving out her notice period. She had met a German man on one of her flights and they were to wed at the end of the year. To pursue romantic possibilities in the course of work meant being simultaneously open to men who were sincere in their interest, but shutting down those who were either insincere or undesirable. To deal with such men, Seema said, women knew when to take on a more confrontational style. When I asked her how she would shut down flirtation, she replied,
"Shut up call. Check out our girls sometime, would you? We have literally become rude in this situation," she said, "if someone flirts with us, so we, on the spot, give him a shut up call," I asked her what that meant and she replied, "meaning we say, "shut up" so then he, next time, won't have the guts to do it again, and then he will tell others too, that be careful how you speak to her, she's one to deliver a slap to the face."

This confrontational style didn't just set airline women apart from Pakistani women, they argued, it made them more cosmopolitan as well. Nazli argued: "Basically Fauzia, there is a lack of awareness in our society, basically, my own experience, what I've seen is that we are all about words here, not about action. I'm sorry I'm being a little bit being blunt here," she said, continuing, "Now what is the definition of bluntness? Here in Pakistan, they see a truthful style as insolence," she said, "whereas in the west, they do things openly, here it is preferred to be clandestine, and if you are open, they say you are blunt, and it is disliked." Other women argued that firmness should be distinguished from rudeness. Sarah says, "the word I am using is assertive, see, assertive, firm, not rude," she explains that airline attendants have to be assertive, "because flying is a very risky form travel, I mean it is safe, but I mean, you are not on the ground, you're in mid-air; so naturally I have to behave firmly. Safety standards are extremely important." In a similar vein Bee argues that she works not in hospitality, as some of the older airhostesses put it, but "in aviation," and that involves a controlled, careful, and firm mode of interaction.

While modalities of control provide women with a sense of professionalism, they also foster the notion that negative and invasive interactive outcomes are ultimately women's responsibility. Bee argues, "see, a human creates the atmosphere herself," echoing an axiom I heard in all of my field sites she says, "you will find good and bad people everywhere but you should have that much willpower inside you, because you will meet total strangers, you will encounter different people daily, and they will be all sorts. It's not necessary that all will be nice, some may be bad, so you should know what you need to do, and by now I have got so much experience because our job is customer service, so we can usually tell just by looking at people what they are like." By arguing that women were ultimately responsible for the

encounters they faced, that they had to be clever, perceptive, strong and in control, airline women emphasized the need for a cosmopolitan subjectivity.

Cosmopolitan Subjectivities: Besides redefining the meaning of mobility and interactive competence, women also claim that these aspects of their job signify a cosmopolitan subjectivity. Naz, for instance, says of her job, “Personally, if I consider my own person, then I feel I am complete,” because of this job, “I have learned the difference between good and bad, the difference between being a human being rather than just a being.” Being a human being, and a complete person, according to airline women, involves reflexivity, agency and autonomy, qualities that airline women feel set them apart from “average” and “ordinary” girls in the culture around them. Meera argues that, in contrast to people in European countries, she feels that Pakistanis, in general, have the attitude of leaving things to fate and God.

> We have this attitude, we will say, “leave it to God,” God is in charge, but then if we leave things to God, then obviously, they will remain suspended because... God is not going to come and replace your glasses, if you left them too close to the edge of the table, they will fall. He has set a system in motion, He has given me the reasoning skills about how to wear things, how to place them on the table, how to take care of my things. ... He has given me command, how I should speak, how I should interact, how I should complete an action, how I should sit, how I should manage myself, that is all up to me.

Feeling possessed of a distinct, more European sense of agency means acquiring a kind of reflexivity and projectivity. Not just going through the motions to progress through life in a pattern dictated by culture, but thinking about where one has been and where one is going. Meera, a 25-year-old airhostess who has been flying for five years, put it this way, “You get to learn a lot from this job, that is what I have seen, because this was my first job. I lived in Abbottabad before I joined PIA, I lived in a normal, ordinary way, got educated, primary school, middle school and all that, but when you go out (abroad), you learn a lot about life, that that was not life, what we were living before. I mean you get to see where you were and where you have to go, the distance you have to cover.”

This projectivity (see Mische 2009) and reflexivity applies not only to organizing action but also to constructing a life style that is easy, convenient and beautiful. Mehr, a senior purser, for instance, argues

that Japan and Germany were her favorite places to visit, because the Japanese, in particular, "they're very humble and clean. They have art inside them. Like, even if you go buy a toothpick from a shop, you will see that even the toothpick, it is also carved, everything is made with care and thought, everything there, the humblest thing is beautiful." When I asked Sarah, a single mother of two teenaged boys what she had learned from her job she said, "I learned how to live life, in short, I learned how to live." For some people like Mehr, learning how to live meant knowing what to consume, she said, "this job taught me the difference between Mac and Medora lipstick." (Mac is a well-known international make up brand, while Medora is a Pakistani cosmetic brand primarily aimed at working-class women). But for others like Sarah, knowing how to live meant making lifestyle arrangements that reflected personal aspirations rather than just following a pattern set by received culture. For instance, she argued,

> People make things hard for themselves, cooking, it has to be done this way cleaning, it has to be so, so so, and homework, I have to direct it personally, but I don't allow such fuss to ruin my life, I have learned to make things easy, I buy frozen foods, like chicken nuggets, or you can get rotisserie chicken at the mall, and then, instead of washing dishes, I use disposable paper plates. That way, everyone is peaceful, the children also know how to manage when I am not there, they also have learned to be responsible.

For Sarah, using paper plates and buying ready-made food represented a practical outlook. People who are too hung up on home-cooking, or fastidious housekeeping methods have no time left over to enjoy life or pursue pleasure. But as an airline attendant, Sarah felt she was able to see through the impracticality of such traditional arrangements and to reflexively choose a lifestyle that fit with her goals.

Taking command means setting things to order, and being punctual, well turned out and organized. Sana says that being in control of yourself, your responses and your interactive style provides control over life in general, "there are some people who grasp these things quickly, but those that don't, they face problems." She argues, explaining, "Because there is a music right, each thing has its own music, so then they face that kind of music, those who keep their life streamlined, they face a good kind of music."

Patriarchal Pact[3]:

[3] The notion of patriarchal pacts is crucially indebted to Kandiyoti's 1988 term, "patriarchal bargain". Pacts are similar but refer to relational contention more specifically, rather than

Airline attendants' cosmopolitan presentations, especially their assertions of heightened autonomy, independence and sophistication didn't always accord with my field observations. In their interaction with male colleagues, women's performances were aimed at accomplishing what I describe as a patriarchal pact, a gendered form of conscription that draws men to support women's personal and professional objectives through patriarchal idioms of female weakness and male guardianship but that simultaneously constrains women's professional capacities.

For one thing, airline women appeared to rely quite heavily on male colleagues, even in the context of simple everyday operations and interactions. Naz, for instance, interrupted her interview with me several times to poke her head out of the cubicle and ask her male colleagues what they thought she should say to me. On one such occasion, she had been telling me that in the 90s PIA constrained women from marrying until they had completed at least five years of service, and further that the airline had at the time disallowed women to fly after the age of 40. I asked her what the current age of retirement was and she got up, stuck her head out of her office cubby and called out to her male colleague across the hall, "Saleem," she called out, "Should I tell the truth or should I lie?" she asked him. "Truth," he hollered back, "the truth always wins!" "But" she yelled back, "You always instruct me that it's better to lie." "Yes," he replied, "but she has come here for her research, so she should learn things right," continuing, "now if Fauzia decides to lie, then that is up to her." Emboldened by this exchange, Naz came in and delivered a diatribe against "the rot" that political influence had ushered in to PIA. "The rules about appearance and self-presentation have gone by the wayside," she said angrily, "because women with political influence are able to get around them and do as they please."

I witnessed such dynamics not only in the context of my interviews, but also in my observations of the union office. Although several women served the union alongside men, doing what they called "welfare work" (i.e. helping airline attendants manage various issues with management), it was the men who acted as brokers, rallying various connections to further the women's various personal and professional projects.

Bee, for instance, turned to male colleagues for help generating data for an assignment her MBA course instructor had set her. She needed printouts of PIA's balance sheets over the past five years and didn't know where to get them. "Shall I go to the stock exchange and look for them?" She asked Saqib, who was busy completing an audit report for the General Manager's office. "Do you know Yasir Khan,"

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describing the broader, sometimes symbolic strategies women deploy in order to secure various, limited benefits from patriarchy.

Saqib asked her in reply, "he can get them for you." Bee shook her head to signal that she didn't know Yasir. "I'll speak to him for you," Saqib assured her.

Women sought men's aid not only for help with unofficial tasks, such as obtaining hard-to-access financial data for their degree programs, but also with quasi-official operations, like handling written communications with management. Razia, a senior bursar, for instance, ran into trouble with a pilot on a domestic flight one day. In her words, the pilot became enraged with her over the appearance of one of her staff, a young male flight attendant. Razia says the pilot asked her why Waseem had not shaved properly. She said, "I told him, 'oh really, I hadn't noticed he is unshaven, let me put on my glasses, I did not see anything objectionable without my glasses." This response apparently angered the pilot, who, Razia says, had come on board with a pre-existing bad mood, which had only worsened in the course of the flight and which he unleashed at her in the end. When the flight ended, she says, the pilot told her, "you better not fly with me again, you are not a professional, don't ever dare set foot on my flight again!" She said, "I told him, "it's you who are unprofessional!" At this, she claims he stepped forward with his hand raised as if to hit her, yelling, "Get out of my plane!" "He came to hit me," she said to me, her voice shaking in rage. She then turned to the entire Union office, saying, "I'm going to use the Women's Protection Bill against him" (referring to a piece of recently passed legislation aimed at protecting women against violence), "I won't put up with this treatment." Then she turned to me and went on, "he was the one who was unprofessional," she said, "he has no consideration, complaining about the boy's shave, does he realize what time Waseem had to report to work?" she asked me? "Even if I had noticed his growth, which I didn't, because it was not visible without glasses, I couldn't have sent him back home, does the pilot not realize, we are short staffed?" she asked me.

The pilot didn't just yell at Razia, he lodged a complaint against her with the management, who put the complaint in her permanent file and also asked her to tender a written explanation for her part in the episode. Razia was clearly very angry, union staff were worried that in her emotional state, she would make things worse with management by bringing up the women protection bill and insisting that that it was unreasonable to ask the crew to shave. Union member Saleem, therefore, acted to broker the affair on her behalf. First, he talked Razia down, then he went along with her to the Management office to smooth things over with the bosses there. Razia returned to the Union office considerably pacified. "Now, it's all settled," Saleem told her, "there's nothing to do or worry about," he said. "All you need to do now is write a letter presenting your version of events, and that's it." "But I can't write a letter!" Razia exclaimed, "In

English? How can I write in English?" She grumbled. Saleem sighed and shook his head. He then asked me to write the letter on Razia's behalf.

Besides such official and quasi-official assistance, airline women also rely on men for unofficial, informal succor. I met Sameena in the midst of just such an enterprise. She had come to the union office to ask for help getting out of a scheduled training session, and struck up a conversation with me while she waited for the union staff to get done with their other errands. Every few years, she told me, airline attendants are required to undergo supplementary training, which equips them to serve on additional kinds of aircraft than the ones for which they had initially trained. In this way, the crew's ability to handle different kinds of equipment advances with time. But Sameena did not want to take on the added competence, which would ramp up her route potential. She feared that the training would qualify her to take on longer journeys, which would mean she would spend more time away from home. "I prefer doing up-down flights," she explained to me, referring to the primarily domestic routes that took attendants, "up" on early morning flights out of the city, and brought them back "down" in the afternoon of the same day. Sameena said these flights allowed her to balance work and domestic responsibilities. Her husband, she said, was an unusually fussy person, "he likes his food to be cooked fresh, daily, and at home," she said. "But I don't want to quit my job because the money allows me to send my children to good schools," she argued, "and to pay for after school tuition programs." To maintain this uneasy balance between a demanding job and a taxing husband, Sameena was forced to turn to Faisal, the union boss, even though she said she found it distasteful to ask for help like this, "on a personal basis." "My husband doesn't like it when I get too buddy, buddy with the men at work," she said bitterly, "but here (in this job), you have to hold someone's hand like a child, in order to walk," she explained, "if you want to get out of training, or get a preferred route assignment, you have to seek patronage," she said, "you can't go speak directly to the GM, or DGM (deputy General Manager), the monsters (*khabees),* won't do anything without their (the union men's) say-so." She said, "these guys bring PPP, PML(N) clout (local political parties), nothing can happen unless it goes through them."

As she wound up this speech, Faisal the union boss burst in through the door, three women forming a train behind him. He came in and said, laughing, "today there are lots of women chasing me." His entourage didn't seem to find this funny. Faisal came up to Sameena and asked her roughly, "You already did *sifaarish* (used a connection to put a word in for you) so then why did you ask me?" "No, no," she replied in alarm, "I have no connection, who would I use?" Faisal eventually got Sameena out of the

training.

These gendered dynamics of women seeking and men tendering assistance as agents or go-betweens were especially amplified during training sessions. In each module of training I observed trainers would get more and more irritated as women continued to hang back, looking nervous and irresolute. Meanwhile men would attempt to leap into the breach, making lighthearted excuses for the women, coaxing their colleagues with jokes, and deflating the tension with ribald humor. For instance, during a fire-fighting module, the trainer, a well-dressed woman in heels, had to repeat her barked orders thrice before Shehnaz, trembling, complied. "Shehnaz, forward! Forward! Forward!" She said. Shehnaz tottered up to the fire in her heels, ducking and cringing. With her face turned towards her shoulder, she called out "Fire!" in a faint voice, lifted the extinguisher and pressed the nozzle, but forgot to sweep the fire. The trainer scolded her and told her to go again. When it was Ahsan's turn, he leapt forward with a cinematic flourish, crying out, "Fire on the deck! Fire! Fire!" in such a melodramatic fashion that his colleagues burst into laughter.

The constant mocking and the relentless comedy irritated the trainer, Hira, who said, "I'm fed up with your non-serious attitude!" Some of the women appeared irritated too, snapping at the men to "stop it," but others seemed to appreciate the humor, which helped diffuse the gravity of what they were doing. As a non-member participant, I only realized the emotional heft of the exercises late in the training during a crash simulation on board a 747 set aside for training. I was sitting in a passenger seat surrounded by crew. We had been instructed to take turns chanting, the left aisle in Urdu and the right aisle in English: "Brace! Brace! Put your head down!" When the exercise began, the Urdu aisle kept going, leaving no room for the English aisle to do their bit. This suppression of English lead to some laughter, and the simulation fell apart. Hira, the trainer, yelled into her bullhorn, telling us to go again, and this time to alternate from Urdu to English. We went again, a cabin full of men and women crew began chanting, relentlessly, in Urdu and then in English, "Brace! Brace! Put your head down!" All of us with shoes kicked off, our heads sheltered in our arms, looked down at our naked feet, yelling, "Brace! Brace! Put your head down!" This time, the sustained chorus generated a collective effervescence made all the more powerful by the recent crash of a PIA plane, which had left behind no survivors. When we stopped, several minutes later, many of us had tears running down our faces.

In part, the emotional tenor was structured by the trainers' insistence on performativity. Each of the commands and alerts attendants used during training were not only scripted, but also had to be

performed in particular ways. Airline attendants had to chant "brace, brace," in a particular, urgent, tone, uttered at a specific volume. Before each collective simulation, Naushaba, the head trainer, would make airline attendants practice the modulation and delivery of the call outs individually, over and over again, until they got this right. Then when they put it together in a group simulation, she would harp about "choreography." For instance, during one simulation, she lectured in English that, "even in normal work, during non-emergency moments, you have to choreograph your movements. The passenger is watching all of you as if you are on stage. Similarly,
in an emergency also, it is all about choreography and performance. You have to bring the urgency, and the assertiveness in your voice that will prompt people to obey."

But while the performative aspect of the training made the simulated emergencies feel more real, the makeshift character of the tools at hand made flight-work feel riskier. For instance, one training session I observed was intended to provide competency for handling emergencies on a 777 aircraft. But the trainers had access only to a 747 to work with. Similarly, attendants were shown flares they could use during emergencies. But, they were told that the flares on display were no longer in use on aircraft. What they would actually get was a more sophisticated flare, one that had two functionalities, one for daylight, and another for night-time use. Mustafa, a senior bursar was bewildered. He kept staring at the flare and asking just how it worked. Someone told him it was like a sparkler (a kind of firework). "How can anyone see a sparkler in the daylight?" he asked. No one had an answer and nor did attendants get a chance to actually discharge the flares that were available, to get an idea of how to work them and how they would appear if they were set off.

Between the makeshift training equipment and the requirement to produce emotionally charged performances, training became an emotionally fraught affair, creating heightened anxiety for trainees, and an affective situation that men tried to manage not only with jokes but also by pushing forward when women colleagues held back. During the emergency simulations, for instance, men would volunteer to play the lead parts, while women hung back, stared into their phones, or huddled together. During the crash-landing simulations, none of the initial rounds, which were all led by men, were smoothly executed. The training was conducted in both English and Urdu and while trainees managed to get through the Urdu rounds with fewer slip-ups, they appeared to find the English rounds impossible to get through. After several rounds of practice, the trainer insisted that one of the women take the lead for the final round. Roshanay, a middle aged, senior attendant, gamely put her hand up, volunteering to lead. The

others clapped and cheered for her. Roshanay made very few fumbles and wound up doing a better job than her male colleagues. As everyone broke for lunch, Roshanay strutted around proudly; the others gave her high fives and clapped her on the back.

After lunch, the trainees assembled at the swimming pool for a water-landing simulation. Roshanay had lost all her swagger. She grabbed my arm on the way to the pool, urgently whispering, "I don't know how to swim!" When we got closer to the pool, I saw the women huddled in the back, near the changing rooms, many already in life vests. One of the women came up to me, saying, "listen, some of the girls have their menses, you go and speak to Ma'am, tell her they should not be made to go in." This demand came as a surprise to me, given women's usual cosmopolitan performances, I had assumed they would have the forethought and resources to manage such eventualities, especially since none of the trainees on this occasion were fresh recruits, and therefore would have known that the day would end with a dip in the pool. I was very reluctant to take what felt to me like a banal schoolgirl excuse up to Hira, who was now looking quite belligerent, screaming commands into her bullhorn. But I felt like I had no choice. Hira stared at me in shock! Then she yelled into her bullhorn, "anyone who doesn't go in the pool doesn't pass the course!"

After a great deal of yelling on Hira's part, and flailing on the part of the airline women, eventually, Hira got everyone into the pool. They all huddled together in the shallow end, clinging to a bar on the side and to each other. Hira yelled at them to form clusters of six around each of the several life-tubes floating in the deep end. Thirty minutes later, there were still no clusters of six, although there were a few of four. Many of the women were holding onto the bar at the edge of the pool, grimacing, apparently distrustful of their life vests. Roshanay was amongst those clinging to the bar, looking distressed. Hira tried to pry her hands loose but failed. The rest of the crew were scattered around the shallow end of the pool, trying to figure out how to move across in their vests. It didn't seem to me like many of them knew how to swim. A few more clusters got formed. Hira kept yelling that no one was going home until she had all her clusters. A few more came into being. Finally, with two clusters remaining, Naushaba, the big boss trainer came onto the scene. She was frowning and shaking her head in dismay. She commanded, "everyone out of the pool." It took several minutes for everyone to comply. Naushaba got the crew to form a line, telling them that they had to jump in, swim up to a raft at the far end of the pool, jump on, secure the lines, steady the raft and then help their team members up. Some of the younger men took the lead, volunteering to go first. Two men who looked to be in their twenties, dove in neatly, swam over, yanked themselves up, and

secured the lines. Two other young men followed them and clambered up, holding their hands out for their colleagues to grab. Gradually the crew made its way to the raft and got on board. Everyone but Roshanay, who was cringing, still holding fast to the bar, saying, "I can't I just had eye surgery." Naushaba yelled at her, "I will fail you!" Roshanay looked at the raft in dismay. Mustafa, a middle-aged crewman, called out, "come on, we got you," he held his arm out. Roshanay flailed off towards the raft, her eyes narrowed, panting hard. She paddled over in her life vest grabbing desperately for Mustafa's hand. Mustafa grabbed her outstretched hand and hauled her up on the raft. This little tableau reminded me of my conversation with Sameena, who had remarked that to get ahead in PIA, women had to "hold someone's hand like a child, in order to walk." The training sessions amplified these more quotidian relationships of dependence and deference. Both men and women in the training session were doing gender in conventional ways. Men, pushing forward, taking charge, and tendering support, women, hanging back, trembling, holding their hands out of assistance. In part I understood this conventionality as a mode of coping with the stress of a risky job, the danger of which, training sessions worked to amplify. Men managed this stress not only through comedy, but by enacting the role of protector and benefactor. Women managed the stress by leaning on men. Each group in effect made a patriarchal pact in order to manage the riskiness of their work.

I also understood women's dramatic departure from cosmopolitanism as reflective of their constrained resources. The airline certainly provided these working-class women with opportunities usually reserved for elites, the ability to travel and observe a variety of customs and settings, travel allowances that permitted women to foreign luxury items, makeup training, and training in interaction but these affordances, as the swimming pool scene shows, represent surface level competencies after all. Staying at luxury hotels with swimming pools is not the same as learning how to swim. That skill requires not just exposure but regular access to swimming pools. In Pakistan, such access is limited to those middle and elite class actors whose parents possess club memberships to places like the Sindh Club (a very snooty, British era country club that only permits men to become members). Other, less elite clubs are also primarily middle-class institutions, some open to army officers, others to businessmen. As working-class women, airline attendants did not enjoy such privileges in their personal lives, nor did the airline training extend that far. Similarly, travelling abroad and purchasing western outfits, shoes and purses is not the same as learning about feminine hygiene products or about medications that can help women manage biological eventualities. Tampons are not widely used in Pakistan, nor do Pakistani women routinely

consider meddling in their cycles via medication. Airline women's lack of preparedness and their apparent belief that biology should trump the institution's routines, suggest that the kind of self-control I took for granted, is a product of a more sustained and deeper exposure to western modes of work than the cosmopolitanism airline women can affect.

Airline women's cosmopolitanism therefore was circumscribed in two ways. First, the affordances their jobs provided were after all fairly limited. They permitted women to display cosmopolitanism but not to assimilate entirely to it. Second, the performance was constrained because it only furnished on set of airline women's relational agendas, allowing them to disconnect from those they deemed backward for stigmatizing them. But airline women, as I have shown, had a second relational agenda that was crucial for their survival within PIA. They sought to recruit men to act as agents who would go-between, smooth over and ease women's various professional and personal projects. By employing deferential modes in their interactions with male colleagues, women traded on patriarchal idioms of protection and gallantry to cement a patriarchal pact with their male colleagues. By invoking notions of chivalry and male protection airline women shored up men's masculinity, which helped men feel more competent and emotionally stable in contrast with their fragile, flailing women colleagues. The patriarchal pact also furthered airline women's bid to recruit airline men to work as their agents.

These bids were crucial because women are hard pressed to access informal networks of patronage without relying on men to act as their agents. Men in this context are endowed with greater spatial and temporal privilege than women, and enjoy therefore, deeper relationships with political actors able to pull strings and move resources within PIA. Thus, by enacting a circumscribed kind of cosmopolitanism, one that can be withdrawn in certain interactions, women were able to accomplish two different relational objectives. Deploying circumscribed cosmopolitanism allows them to disconnect from those who would vilify them for their work, but still rely on patriarchal idioms to recruit men colleagues as allies and agents willing to tap into informal networks of power on women's behalf. But while this circumscription allows women to secure competing relational ends, it also reinforces their marginality within the field. Women's deferential performances unwittingly reinforce men's authority to interpret, define and resolve various problems and crisis, a dynamic that as I show in chapter 4, works to marginalize women's voices and perspectives within the aviation setting.

CHAPTER 2

Martial Motherhood; Moral Performance, Bifurcated Inclusion, Pakistan's Lady Health Worker Program

On a balmy Karachi winter's day, Shazia and Meera, two Lady Health Supervisors (LHS) serving Shamsheer a far flung working class district populated by factory workers, vegetable farmers and fishermen, invited me to attend a monthly meetings with their Lady Health Workers, a women-only community health force employed by the Pakistani state to control child and maternal mortality, circulate family planning tools and prescriptions, push vaccine compliance and manage diseases such as tuberculosis. We met up outside a rambling old building, set back from the road in a large mud lot and shaded with trees. Draped in peeling paint and caked in dust, the building must have been an elegant mansion in the 1940s, when it was built, but the local government appropriated it a few years ago as an abandoned building. Shazia tells me how her boss, a government appointed district doctor, asked his various health workers, including Shazia and her family, to occupy the building as an initial step towards seizing it for official use. He had promised her, she says, that she would get to stay on after he had captured it, allowed to live with her family in the servants' quarters built in the back, but later he changed his mind.

Shazia meets me in the mud lot used for parking. Her sons are with her, all of them carrying plastic chairs they have brought from her home. "See I have to arrange for chairs on a personal basis," she

says to me laughing. I follow her inside and we make our way down a dusty corridor, to wait outside a closed door. The room is occupied, there's a vaccinators' meeting going on, but once it's over, Shazia says, the room will be free for the rest of the day and we can use it. "I'm glad you're here," she says to me, "I told them (the people in charge at this hospital) that doctor *sahib* (the big boss who permitted me to do my research in the field) sent you, that you have come from America," she says, grinning, "so now they will let us have the room." Some fifteen minutes later, I follow Shazia into the room. Expecting a conference room, I'm surprised to find a roomy office dominated by a very large desk, draped in green fabric and covered with files. There are six chairs arranged around the desk and several more stand like sentries against the walls. A troop of twenty women trail in behind us, seating themselves in the various chairs, pulling their files out of the plastic shopping bags they use as tote bags. Some of the women place their gaping, worn out purses on the floor beside them. Two women have balanced tiny babies on their knee, and are bending down to fuss over them. Shazia introduces me to the room, although many of the women already know me. The room fills instantly with several concurrent conversations.

The women are all laughing and shouting over one another. Razia, a particularly shrill and bubbly young worker, is explaining why women in her "catchment area" are unable to comply when Razia, following official prescriptions, instructs them to deliver their babies in hospitals. "Listen, in the homes in my area," she tells me, beaming with affability, "there are days when the stove never gets lit, the women have to turn to handwork (stitching, knitting) in order to eat, and it's hard to make the rent, so they tell me, '*baji* (sister), to go to hospital I have to pay (taxi) fare, then registration, then they write medicines, these things are not in my capacity…"

But Razia's narration is suddenly cut off. The door opens with a bang and a large man stamps into the room, storming, "*Hanh jee (yeah)*, what business do you all have here?" he asks very aggressively. "We're from the National Program," several women reply in chorus, referring to the official title of the Lady Health Worker program in Pakistan. "Ask Madam," one voice calls out. "The Vaccinator meeting is over" another says.

"But here, I don't have the capacity for you," the man shouts, angrily. He puts a lot of emotion into the word "you" as if it is particularly these women he can't accommodate. Another man is cringing behind the

large doctor in the hallway, trying desperately to placate the first, “sir they are from Aman (Bill Gates' foundation in Pakistan, which partners with the government on various health initiatives including Polio eradication and birth control), they've gotten permission,” he whimpers.

“No, no,” the women argue, “we're from the National Program,” one clarifies, “Where did Aman come from?” another asks angrily. The large doctor doesn't seem to care, “I'll see to all of you,” he says, in what sounds like a threat. He stalks out of the room. The women start rising and collecting their things. Raised male voices continue in the hallway. The second man is telling the first one, “sir I'll arrange a place over there, sir, I'll move them.” The first man continues shouting.

The women start filing out of the room, many of them muttering under their breath. I'm not sure what to do and stand up to follow them. Meera, my co-host looks embarrassed, she says, “The problem is that we have no place to sit.” I am feeling a bit shaken after the rude encounter. “Many people have been telling me that,” I reply, “I'm very glad I got to see it myself.”

“When we are given a room, it is snatched from us,” Meera continues, “we get a brief joy, 15-days-of happiness, we come, put up charts on the walls,”

“Spend our money,” Sana, a middle-aged worker, interjects.

“Spend a thousand rupees on it,” Meera continues, “and they came and snatch it from us. Along with the decoration,”

“We all get together and contribute donations,” (i.e. for chart papers and other trimmings), Sana interjects again.

“It (the room) is snatched along with the decoration,” Meera continues, “okay, at least return our trimmings,” she says, laughing sarcastically, “and the proof of this, there's a room in the back here, even now, I can show you, it's got charts up that we made by hand.”

Shazia, my host, re-enters and Sana says to her, “Madam, go again and speak, sir was here right now, raging that ‘you people have no business sitting here.’”

“I heard the shouting,” Shazia replies.

“You go and speak again,” Sana insists.

“I heard what he had to say,” Shazia replies more firmly this time. I assume she doesn’t want to face the man’s further wrath.

Another male doctor comes sheepishly into the room, he comes directly up to me apologizing, “you carry on, Madam, there’s no problem,” he says.

“Why was he raging?” Shazia asks.

“I’ll arrange chairs for you,” the doctor says to me, ignoring the question.

“Thank you, sir,” Shazia says, humbly.

I am thoroughly embarrassed, I say to the doctor, “no worries, I understand, people are very sensitive about chairs in Pakistan.” (This was a rather pathetic pun because a chair can refer also to a post, i.e. like a seat of government).

“No, we don’t want chairs,” Meera says emphatically, “We want a room!”

Several women take up this chant. “We want a room,” “We want a room.” The doctor withdraws. Eventually, we are shunted to a covered verandah in the back of the building; it’s a tiny, dusty, empty space without chairs or tables, Shazia’s “personal chairs” come in handy after all.

While jarring, this encounter was not altogether unexpected. In the year that I spent observing lady health workers (LHWs) and their immediate supervisors (LHS)[4], these voluble and cheerful women literally occupied the margins of the health offices I frequented to meet with them. Although as a visiting scholar with no connection to the state, the doctors at the local district hospital I frequented provided me with a room (and attached bathroom) to carry out my researches, my participants, actual employees of the state, typically hung around in corridors, sat in groups on stairwells, loitered in parking lots, or perched on public benches when they came to these offices for meetings or other business. "We are not given any room or space for our work," they complained to me, "if we want to have a meeting we have to do it in my house," Shazia told me. Similarly, Laila, a 40-year-old LHW, said angrily in an interview, that although she is required to visit various clinics and health offices, where she has assigned duties to complete, she is given no space, nor seat, while she is there, "sometimes they sit us in the corridor," she says, "if we are friendly with someone there, personally, if we get along, for instance, with the vaccinator, then she may allow us to sit in her office, but everyone else will say, 'you can't sit here, you will disturb our work.'"

This lack of provision was compounded by what women described as their humiliating treatment at the hands of various bosses. "They think of us as dust on their shoes," Ayesha, a middle-aged supervisor complained, "They think we are equivalent to slippers," she said of her bosses. Women complained that bosses spoke to them shortly, yelled at them, flung files at them, left them kicking their heels for hours despite having set up appointments, and worse, that they occasionally harassed them sexually.

This treatment is surprising, not just because Lady Health Workers protect this developing country against the ravages of disease and overpopulation, but also because in addition to these onerous duties, LHWs expend considerable effort going door-to-door administering the Polio vaccine. As frontline forces in the battle to eradicate the Poliovirus, Pakistani Lady Health Workers are therefore vital links in the transnational aid circuit that facilitates sizable flows of foreign currency into Pakistan via the GPEI (Global Polio Eradication Initiative)—a billion-dollar-a-year global project seeking to purge the world of the Polio virus by way of vaccinating vulnerable children. Pakistan is one of the last countries in the world to still

[4] LHWs and LHW are both part of a cadre described collectively as LHWs (Lady Health Workers) in reality, they perform slightly different duties, (LHS manage LHWs) and receive marginally different salaries (about $50 difference), but as they are part of the same health force, beset by similar problems, in this chapter, in the interest of parsimony I will describe both simply as LHWs unless the distinction is especially relevant.

host the crippling and incurable Polio disease. And LHWs are crucial agents in the state's efforts to eradicate it. Accordingly, national and transnational policy documents describe LHWs in glowing terms as the backbone of the Pakistani health system and the GPEI project in Pakistan (Kayani et al 2016, Khan et al 2009, GPEI website).

Yet, despite their indispensable service LHWs continue to report humiliation not only at the hands of local government and its various global partners but also from their families and the communities they serve. How do health workers manage this ongoing subordination? What kinds of performances do they bring to bear in managing the denigration they must confront in the course of their work? And how do their contentions shape the broader relational dynamics in this state anchored field of work?

To manage the humiliation connected with their jobs I found lady health workers draw on morally inflected local roles and idioms: quasi-mystical healer, sister-in-faith, holy-warrior, to reframe the meaning of their work, their wages, and their contravention of gender norms. Adopting the role of forbearing woman, quasi-mystical healer, mother, and holy-warrior, lady health workers deploy a quixotic presentation I call **martial motherhood**, a moral performance that not only serves to sanitize their problematized identities but also acts as social emollient, helping ease LHWs efforts to cultivate connections with clients that they can leverage in service to their professional goals. But while these martial motherhood performances work to further LHWs relational agendas with clients, as classed and gendered enactments they also deepen the gender-class breaches that symbolically separate workers and officers in state health arenas. The very cultural idioms and competencies that enable LHWs to connect with poor and working-class citizens also work to expand these working-class women's ongoing marginalization and exclusion from the state they serve.

Interactive Labor, Bridgework and the Cultivation of Connection:

Two sets of literature describe the kind of labor LHWs perform when they help connect state employed doctors and poor, uneducated citizens, two groups of actors separated by a wide gulf in cultural competency and class dispositions. On the one hand the scholarship on organizations and professions understands such workers as brokers. Brokers not only help coordinate intergroup activities through connective practices that facilitate workflows but also use various "buffering" practices (also called *tertius gaudens* practices, see Burt 1992, 2004; Fleming and Waguespack 2007; Long Lingo and O'Mahony

2010; Obstfeld 2005) to help protect and secure the group boundaries and professional integrity of these different sets of actors. Buffering practices involve these brokers in cultural translation labors; brokers work to simplify problems and issues in order to provide high-status colleagues with professionally "pure" problems (Abbott 1981; Barley 1996; Barley and Bechky 1994; Heimer and Stevens 1997) matched to their self-perceptions and identities. Buffering practices are especially efficacious, Kellogg (2014) notes in contexts that involve tasks understood by professional actors to be low status and low value and therefore beneath their dignity. In her 2014 study of a community health center in the United States, Kellogg found that community health workers expended considerable emotional labor (Hochschild 1983), to protect their higher status colleagues from the polluting effects of inter-group coordination by providing deferential treatment and care taking to help preserve the emotional stability of the doctors and lawyers with whom they worked.

A second literature focused on workers' cultural translation efforts goes deeper; focusing on the specific skills and competencies workers must draw on to produce a match between their own dispositions and those of their clients'. The care-work literature refers to this kind of cultural-linking labor as "bridgework" (Otis 2016), a form of interactive labor that requires workers to deploy interactive modes and cultural competencies calibrated to their clients' dispositions. But while the bridgework literature focuses primarily on workers who must acquire skills suited to their higher status clients' cultural capital, CHWs bridgework takes them in a different classed direction. Rather than outfit workers with forms of cultural capital possessed with a high symbolic value, community health work requires workers to deploy forms of capital associated with subordinated class groups. And while upward facing bridgework, mobilizing elite forms of cultural capital provides organizations with profit from worker's culture spanning efforts, the downward facing bridgework of community workers such as LHW's provides organizations, such as the state, with something more. Such labor can help cultivate a sustained personal connection between worker and client that organizations can leverage in pursuit of various goals.

Although the bridgework literature focuses primarily on service workers, such as those employed in elder care and mall sales (Lan 2018, Maitra and Maitra 2019), scholars investigating widely divergent work contexts, such as political party work in India, have also reported ways that workers tailor interactive styles to connect with clients to generate benefit-producing relationships for their employers. In her study of political party workers in India's Shiv Sena party, for instance, Bedi (2016a, 2016b) found that low level women party workers deployed a charismatic dispositional style they referred to as "dashing" in order to

awe and impress new members into joining the party, or voting its leaders into office. Thus, by calibrating interactive styles to clients' cultural expectations and schemas, workers not only generate profit for their employers but also provide organizations with a set of relationships that generate various benefits, such as repeat customers or loyal voters.

In certain sectors of service work, such as health or education, such relationships are not just useful by products of interactive labor, but are instead the primary vehicle for the cultivation of an organization's "product." In such cases, relationship is the primary, albeit intangible engine for the production of a commodity of interest. Allison Pugh (2018) refers to this kind of service-work as "connective labor," an invisible, unrewarded, but increasingly systematized relational effort that care-practitioners bring to bear in fostering connection with their clients as a means to generate particular policy related outcomes, such as better test scores, vaccine compliance, safe sexual practices. This connection not only interpellates[5], or brings into being a particular kind of citizen-subject but also more significantly acts as a medium, an intangible conduit for the actualization of a measurable outcome of interest connected with an organization's broader policy agenda or political mandate.

By calibrating their interactive styles to their low-class clients, LHWs undertake connective labor in service to several of the state's disciplinary and data mining projects. By deploying classed and gendered interactive performances customized to match their clients' schemas and dispositions they generate a worker-client network through which the state can pipe disciplinary measures into private, intimate, gendered arenas and mine data out of them. Through their connective labor LHWs furnish the state with a gendered channel that bypasses the gendered boundaries of households, which in the Pakistani setting are protected from state intervention through various norms of gendered propriety (or *purdah*) that constrain the state's ability to apprehend or address women citizens in contexts, like the peri-urban pockets of Karachi, where women practice modesty norms. By going from house to house, LHWs furnish the state with a gendered channel that facilitates the flow of data and policy back and forth between the state and its women citizens, at times in defiance of the wishes of the women's male family members. LHWs not only push the state's family planning and vaccination agendas amongst women citizens, they also collect and preserve valuable data about family size and health dynamics through their interaction and connection with these women.

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[5] For instance, by deploying raced modalities of commanding, corralling, searching and frisking actors, police officers concretize citizenship in racial terms, see Fassin 2013:

Like other invisible and intangible forms of labor (e.g. emotional labor) connective labor can be seen as exploitative of workers because it commoditizes and profits from a labor that it ultimately fails to recognize or reward. Indeed, as I show in this chapter, the LHWs labors are exploitative in a second, and for LHWs, more consequential way. In the LHW case, these invisible relational labors rely on a set of performances that also reaffirm LHWs' mismatch within the dignified arenas of state health work. This mismatch makes for what I call **bifurcated inclusion,** a nominal incorporation of working-class women within the state, which relies on their cultural competencies whilst simultaneously pathologizing their dispositions and casting them as incompetent. While LHWs performances enable them to connect with and serve working-class and poor citizens because the cultural idioms and symbols that animate their work are matched with their clients' cultural schemas. Yet, it is precisely their working-class, gendered, social location, their lack of economic and informational resources, that blight these women's capacities to perform the part of competent bureaucrat necessary to participate in the relationships and networks that anchor economic and symbolic power within in the state.

Stigma and Subordination:

The devaluation of LHWs labor proceeds along several fronts. Their labors are dismissed and denigrated not only in the health offices where LHWs receive their orders and submit their data, but also in the families and communities they serve and support through their work. In this section I detail various instances of LHWs stigmatization before turning to a consideration of their responses to this degradation.

Families and Communities: "This work is not considered decent," LHW Razia's 20-year-old daughter told me. Razia has four children. Her husband, when he was alive, worked as a sweeper in a local *madrasah*, his income too small to provide for the children's education. To plug this gap, Razia took to doing LHW work, because, she argued, unlike other jobs she may have chosen, in this job, one need interface only with women, "it's just ladies. We have no interaction with males, even our LHS (supervisors) are ladies." Yet despite her laying claim to the moral high ground of gender seclusion in this statement, her work did involve transgressing the morally charged gendered boundaries of home to trudge from house to house-collecting information and dispensing health care, work that Razia says initially made her feel shame. "Why do you come here to incite my wife," she says one man would tell her each time she

showed up, shouting at her and calling her names, "our women are not like you, they practice *Purdah*" he would say. But worse, Razia's work also came to be a source of pain for her young daughters, both of whom recently got engaged to men their mother selected. Samreen, the elder daughter, a primary school teacher, complained to me, "In our society, even the educated class thinks this job (LHW work) is bad (i.e. indecent)." Her mother's job, she says has created ripples of disgrace amongst her in-laws. "Some people went to my prospective in-laws, taunting them and saying, 'her mother walks the roads, where are you getting your son married?" the comments caused embarrassment for Samreen when her in laws repeated them back to her, she tells me, "I have never been against my mother's work, but obviously when I hear such comments, I feel a lot of pain."

Other LHWs report facing similar kinds of humiliation on account of their work. When Hajra first began working as an LHW, she says, neighbors reacted so badly that she and many of her colleagues took to doing the work under cover, pretending that they weren't LHWs at all, but only state agents collecting data. "People would say to our faces, LHW! Such contemptible, dirty work! Couldn't you find anything else to do?" The program's association with family planning, she explains, creates stigma for LHWs, because going from home to home to talk about condoms and family planning is not deemed decent or respectable behavior. Not only is it vulgar to discuss sex with strangers, contraceptives are deemed contrary to religious values by religious leaders who claim that birth control represents unwarranted interference in divine providence[6]. Indeed, other LHWs told me that they too experienced feelings of shame because of the nature of their work. Farzana, an LHW with two decades of experience under her belt, laughs as she tells me how mortifying it was for her to demonstrate condom use at a community meeting she had helped organize. "These are things people feel shy talking about," she says, telling me proudly, "only I had the wherewithal to do so, imagine," she says, "I gave that presentation, I was given the task to talk about condoms to the community women, there were some males there too,

[6] This debate about birth control and providence came up for debate in Pakistan's parliament recently. Female parliamentarians raged about the state's focus on women as a locus of population control. They were shut down by religious leaders who argued that birth control is contrary to religious values, see: "Women Lawmakers Suggest 'Sterilisation of Men' to Control Population." *The Express Tribune*, The Express Tribune, 16 Jan. 2019, tribune.com.pk/story/1888987/1-women-lawmakers-suggest-sterilisation-men-control-population/.

doctors, standing in the back, the trainer told me to demonstrate, so I did the whole demonstration, and showed the women, in front of the male doctors, she says. "At the time I was still young," she says, laughing (she was only 46 when I met her), "now I'm old, so it's a little easier," she says, "but still, you know, at times I have clients who have husbands who are unwilling to use condoms, and then I am the one who has to go and convince the husbands to wear condoms," she says, laughing in embarrassment.

But beyond the content, women's families express unhappiness because even though it entails working primarily amongst women, LHW work does still require a transgression of gender propriety. Meena explains that full *purdah* means "covering the face, and staying home," which LHWs cannot do. When doing Polio work, they are expressly instructed, she says, not to cover their faces. Moreover, as I came to learn, the claim that LHWs rarely interact with men was actually something of a face-saving fallacy. Even though early in our acquaintance some women would represent their work as requiring only female interaction, as we became better acquainted, women admitted that it was actually impossible to avoid men. "Our doctors and bosses are men," Shireen admitted, "and when we go into people's homes, we sometimes encounter their husbands, brothers, fathers, and sons," she said, "even when we go to our colleagues' homes, we meet and interact with their menfolk, it's unavoidable.". This interface can create considerable feelings of shame and mortification for many, especially those who are younger and single. For instance, Hajra explained that she had worked to cultivate a sober and serious mien not as an aid to fostering trust but also because, "laughing, joking, that wouldn't work at all, you have to appear serious to underline your purpose. There are families where it is the men who talk to us on their wives' behalf, the women are too shy, or not good at putting things (in words), so then, we have to listen to those men," she said, arguing that levity would create a vulgar image in the men's minds. I asked her what kinds of things men bring up? And she said they ask questions about women's health and family planning, adding in a grief-stricken voice, "and we people have to talk to their husband." I asked her how she managed such encounters and she said, "we try to appear normal, we cannot say to him that why are you talking to me, why doesn't your wife (do so) because we have a job to do. After all, when we are collecting data, we include men in our (data) entries, so in that way, we can't say that our work is connected only with women and children, there are men also in houses, he can also have health issues, he may have TB and then I have to take him to the center, that's my job."

More feelings of shame are vouchsafed when LHWs go from house to house, knocking on doors to administer the polio vaccine. "Such dirty things people say to us," Shazia tells me, "men will come out

and try to lure us in to their homes as if we are providing some other kind of service she says angrily. These kinds of encounters feel to LHWs as dramatically contrary to the *purdah* logics they prize. Meena for instance contrasts her current work with her sheltered upbringing. "I was brought up so decent that I wouldn't even answer the door, if someone came knocking. I was that type of woman, that I did not even approach the threshold of my home, I stayed inside." But after her arranged marriage to a daily wage laborer, Meena says life took a turn for the worse, "I used to hope for a life partner that would keep me couched in luxury, like a princess. I never dreamed I would live the life I live now, only I know how poorly my life is proceeding, only I know how I manage to keep going." I asked her if she had known women who lived the kinds of sheltered and pampered lives she was wistfully describing and she replied that she encounters such women in the course of her field work, and envies them, "there are such ladies, they have no education at all, they are illiterate and uneducated, they don't even know how to speak properly, but if you see their husbands, you too will be full of envy. When I go in the field, I see them, they do no work at all, not even housework, nor do they have any skills or art, nothing, they can't even make tea…they can barely bother to put their feet on the ground for themselves," she says bitterly.

Not only does purdah transgression cause feelings of envy, in some homes it causes conflict between husband and wife as well. Noor's husband for instance is unemployed and unable to provide for the family, but she says, he hates her work so much that he is willing to pull the children out of school, if she'd only stay home. But it's not just education her wages cover, she complains, her salary also pays the rent, "what I say is, if you feel that I should do full *purdah* (i.e. not leave the home, not reveal her face), then you should feed us. And even now if my husband ever makes a remark, I tell him, I'll go today and resign, but then you have to run the house, and if you can do that, then I'm willing for you to stick me like a doll in a box, I'm willing. I turn it back on him." Yet, these conflicts cause Noor such distress that she told me that in the early days of her employment she sometimes prayed for death.

Office and Bosses: Degradation occurs not only in the private space of LHWs homes and those of their clients but also in the public spaces of clinics, government health offices, and training centers. Shazia for instance, tells me very angrily that at meetings, doctors will frequently refuse to sit next to her, "Just recently we had a meeting," she says, "and initially it was only the doctors, they began without us, and later we were brought in, so I sat down, there was a chair empty, I sat down, next to doctor Jamshaid, and he immediately dragged his chair away, saying loudly, "are we expected to sit with LHWs now?" She was

considerably hurt by this behavior asking, “are we not human?”

Sara, another supervisor who works in the same district as Shazia complained that doctors held LHWs in such low estimation that they thought they could use them like furniture, she whispered, “this one you met yesterday, the fat doctor, he says to me, your workers, do you have any young and viable ones, or are they all old and lame?” She was outraged at this question, telling me, “I’m a health professional, not a pimp!” Fazeela another LHS complained that at a recent meeting, the doctor in charge had caught sight of one of the LHWs in her charge, who is endowed with an especially good figure, “she is tall and she sticks her chest out,” Fazeels tells me, “so the doctor was sitting next to her, touching her arm.” After the meeting, she complains the doctor came and said to her, “Fazeela, either give me her number or give her mine,” Fazeela was indignant, “I’m not a dalal (pimp),” she said, complaining that she was angry also with the LHW, for mixing her up in such a situation. “I also have had a lot of indecent proposals,” she says, “doctors tell me, if not you, then send us one of your girls, this is something I could put on the media even, but why rock the boat, who knows what reprisals there may be.”

Yet, women told me that there were LHWs who were willing to exchange flirtation, and even sex, for small favors. For instance, Salma, a gentle and soft-spoken LHW told me how her financial desperation made her consider cheating on her husband in exchange for material benefit. Sara’s husband had been laid off from his factory work and had been unable to find a job for over a year. Their subsequent poverty had forced them to move to the desperately poor neighborhood where I met her. She was living in the unfinished, upstairs portion of a tiny double story house, located in a warren of unpaved, steep alleys, with goats roaming around outside. When I arrived, she pointed to the dirty alley her home is located in saying, “here, see how I am reduced to living amongst refugees and drug dealers,” she sighed, “this area is considered a no-go area, you know, you are brave for coming here.” But despite the poverty of her neighborhood, Sara said she was still having a difficult time making rent. In desperation, she said she turned to her boss, Dr. Nath, “I asked him to help me get government housing, which some LHWs have got.” Dr. Nath was very sympathetic, she says, he told her he may be able to arrange for her to live in the hospital under his charge. “But then, he started calling me daily, in the evenings,” she says. Sara initially took the calls, saying she felt very guilty about deceiving her husband by chatting with another man. The calls soon escalated, Dr. Nath began to invite Sara out, saying, he would take her shopping and telling her to pretend to her husband that she had gone to do polio work, and that was how she had paid for the shopping. “If his intentions were not bad, then why would he tell me to lie to my husband,” she asks me.

But at this point she says she began to feel trapped, uncertain about how to get out of the relationship without hurting her job. So, she confided in Meera, a fellow LHW, who advised her to be straightforward and tell him 'I'm not that kind of woman, go try your luck elsewhere.' But Dr. Nath, Sara says, kept calling, saying, "you're going through hard times, why not let me help?"

Global Actors and Processes: When it comes to global actors, LHWs paint a more complicated picture of their degradation. Some LHWs describe these UN bosses as a remote, often invisible threat. "We've never even seen them," Yasmin an LHW says, "They don't even come to our areas." For women like Sara, who rely on the meager but regular and certain Polio payment to keep hunger and homelessness at bay, interactions with global actors are degrading not because of the behavior of these officials but because of her extreme dependence and desperation for the job. But Salma, an articulate LHS, who has worked in the National Program since its inception has not only encountered WHO representatives but has found their behavior humiliating and enraging. At the end of an LHS meeting at the head office, I was talking to a couple of LHS' in one corner of the room about global actors, when Salma angrily interrupted, charging across the room to add her voice to the mix. Loudly, she recounted a recent, infuriating encounter with a WHO woman representative, "I'm not afraid," Salma said to me, "I will tell you about it in front of all these women," she said, "they will back me up." The other supervisors grinned and nodded at this speech. Salma told me that she had been supervising a Polio vaccination drive in Steep Hill, a settlement of refugees and people from the North (frequently framed as wild and dangerous people in LHW narratives) that she said is known as a "no-go area." The settlement consists of roughly constructed, unfinished huts, precariously set on a rugged, hill. To get to the settlement, Salma said, one has to walk up a steep, unpaved trail, balancing files and paper work along with other vaccination paraphernalia (mainly a large cooler containing vials of vaccine). But the WHO representative assigned to check and verify Salma's team's work, refused to step out of her air-conditioned, luxury car, much less climb the steep path. Instead, Salma says, the representative was content to ring on Salma's cell phone commanding her to come to the car. Salma was outraged, saying she had to abandon her work and trek down to the car to have her papers signed. Salma says the woman made her walk up and down, not once but several times. This, she said, should convey to me, how the WHO saw and treated women workers.

Other women echoed Salma's anger, saying they were offended by the salary disparity between UN workers and themselves. The difference rankled because UN workers, women said, have no local

knowledge, and are rarely willing to step out of their luxury offices and cars. Moreover, whenever local conditions become too risky, Maria complained, UN workers are pulled out of the field. At such times, and in certain high-risk localities, it is LHWs who must brave the threat of bullets to ensure that vaccination work continues, she complained. While this acceptance of risk is a source of pride for LHWs, they also complain that they see their own endangerment as a sign of how cheaply LHW lives are held. When LHWs do get killed, they complain the compensation they receive is so low it feels less like reparation and more like insult.

Money was a source of degradation in another way too. Rafiya asked me to turn off the recorder so she could tell me "what no one else would have the courage" to tell me. She claimed that the town (meaning local government) and the WHO colluded in corrupt practices, asserting that these actors not only embezzled the money that came into their accounts to pay for materials such as "chalk" and "Photostats" but that often there was a mismatch in the salary amount recorded on paper and that which was paid out. She said her driver's salary was recorded as 4000 rupees on paper but he was paid only 2800 rupees in hand. The big WHO bosses are aware of this corruption, Rafya asserted, but failed to take action.

Martial Motherhood:

In response to this multifaceted degradation I found LHWs cast themselves as essentially distinct from other people, outstanding in their achievements and exceptional in their moral characteristics. For instance, Razia claimed she had always been extraordinary, even as a child, "where other children liked to spend their money on candy," she told me, "I would spend my pocket money on books and notebooks." Similarly, Hajra said that "nature" (*qudrat*) had given her a special civic sense, which prompted her to pick up a broom and clean the local parks and skips in her area. Several women, like Saima, laid claim to extraordinary domestic prowess; saying they possessed uncanny embroidery and stitching skills, distinctive qualities of cleanliness, punctuality, organization, and management capacity, "when you come to my house," Saima said, "you will be amazed, you will ask me, how can one woman accomplish all this, A to Z, everything, I do, but I don't even need to think about it, I just do it automatically." Other women claimed they had inherited healing powers (*shifa*) or mystical qualities from spiritually elevated women in their family.

While these moral performances were fairly broad, three specific schemas were most frequently

and emphatically evoked: forbearance, healing and holy war. Together these frames comprise what I describe as *martial motherhood*, a moral performance that not only serves as a salve against stigmatization but also as I show below, acts as social glue, easing LHW's efforts at cultivating the connection with clients that is a crucial conduit of their work. By deploying these frames in their encounters with clients, community members and colleagues, LHWs trade on a sense of moral community to create and solidify lasting bonds that they can leverage in service to their professional obligations. For instance, Mona, told me that when she was forced to penetrate neighborhoods occupied by a rival ethnic group for Polio work, she relied on her *abaya* and religious language, to reinforce a broader Muslim identity and connect with the community.

As a connective, moral performance, *martial motherhood* deploys logics of connection and social provision, invoking religiously inflected local roles and idioms: quasi-mystical healer, sister-in-faith, holy-warrior, to reframe the meaning of LHWs work, their money, and their contravention of gender norms. But while this martial-maternal performance may work in the communities they serve, it does not serve to protect women's status in the fastidious, rational, bureaucratic government offices where LHWs go to receive orders and submit their reports and findings. In their interaction with officers in charge of bureaucratic health office, LHWs are cast incompetent bureaucrats, mismatched to the dignified government context. Thus, although marital motherhood performances shore up LHWs sense of dignity and help them connect with their clients in the field, they do little to overcome the officer-worker fissures that reinforce these working-class women's ongoing marginalization and exclusion from the state they serve.

In what follows, I describe the three frames of martial motherhood, outlining the ways that each boosts LHWs connective capacity but mismatch the professional logics of the public health field.

Forbearance: With tales of suffering and forbearance LHWs reframe their contravention of gender norms for work as moral action. By narrating their decision to accept a job as a sacrifice they made on behalf of familial obligations, they transform the meaning of their work, making it not about impropriety, or greed, but about kin-provision and fortitude. For instance, Hira, a mother of 5, says she was forced to work when her husband, a bus driver, suffered a spinal injury that caused him to become bedridden. At first, Hira says, she began working out of her home, stitching bows for a bra factory at 10

rupees (roughly 10 cents) per bow. But even though she worked until there were "holes in my fingers" she was still unable to meet rent, pay school fees or cover basic household expenses. Conditions became so bad that Hira says she was forced to accept charity from neighbors and siblings. One day, she says, she fed her children "stale" food, "so at least their belly would be full, even if the food had gone off." Having arrived at such a pass, she says, she saw the LHW job as a divine favor, one that entailed several sacrifices on the domestic front but eventually paid off, "because my training was from 9 to 4, and it took me two hours to get there on the bus, so I was away from home from 7 to 6, my children were small, I taught my eldest, she was 12 years old, to make the roti (bread) in my absence, she was small, so she made it badly, and my husband would lie on the bed and keep making the bows," she says, saying proudly, "and look at me today, eight people sit daily at my *dastar khwan* (meal blanket) and I feed them all."

Other women, like Hira's colleague, Meera, relied on LHW work to "keep the stove burning," after her marriage fell apart. "My husband was a psycho," Meera tells me candidly, saying he would get high on drugs, beat her, and on one occasion even burnt her arms with lit cigarettes. By taking on LHW work, Meera was able to leave her husband and seek shelter in her brother's house, "my family knew that I was going to manage my own expenses, pay my son's (school) fees myself," she says, "so they were willing for me to leave my husband." She supplements her LHW wages by working out of her home as a seamstress and a Quran teacher. Her neighbors do not frown upon her LHW work, she says, because they know her circumstances, the fate that brought her to this pass.

For Mona, LHW work saved her life. "I started because, let me tell you the true story, Allah knows, whatever I will tell you, it's a heart rending story," she says. "I was in a desperate condition, I had been married and I gave birth to a baby but it died, and that caused some disagreements with my husband, and I got divorced, and because of these worries my mother had a heart attack, my mother died. I became completely mad," she says, these desperate circumstances, Mona says, made her contemplate suicide, but a local lady health worker, Isma, took Mona under her wing, "forcing me, first to come with her on Polio rounds," and later convincing Mona's father to let her serve the community by doing health work. The job, Mona says, was a Godsend, "I needed money so bad, my father was in so much debt," she explains. Mona's father's weaving business had been flailing; he was unable to pay his workers, who were consequently falling into terrible poverty. By taking on health work, Mona was not only able to help her father financially, but was also able to provide for his employees and the broader community. Side by side with her health work, she says, she began to sell crocheted purses and cell phone cases, to help her father's

artisans make some money. Now in her 40s, Mona houses an impoverished cousin and his family and also helps neighborhood children with their studies. She says, "now I no longer yearn for death, instead, I desire to serve. So, I got courage from this job, and because of my work, from inside my conscience woke up." Thus, by transforming personal tragedy and grief into impetus for social service and provision, Mona casts her work as moral action, undertaken for the broader social good. Moreover, her experiences act, she says, as currency for connection, helping Mona forge bonds with other women, who are won over when she tells them her story, "when I tell her my full story, she starts crying, she grabs my hand and exclaims, 'sister!' and I reply, 'yes, I've been through such trials, and if I came through it, you will too, like me, you will also become (strong like) iron."

Healing: in addition to forbearing women, LHWs also cast themselves as quasi-mystical healers. In contrast with doctors, who are described as unpleasant (*kharoos*), prone to undermine women's complaints and are overly-consumed with scientific considerations (e.g. relying on too expensive and time-consuming tests), LHWs say they possess innate healing skills, that have particular utility to women, but are also beneficial to the broader community (including animals and the environment). This quasi-spiritual healing is anchored in a heedful awareness and consideration, which, LHWs claim makes them better than doctors at making diagnosis and performing procedures. Farzana, for instance reacted angrily when I suggested that perhaps the reason nurses receive better pay is because they receive more training, "We study the same amount as them, do you know?" She asked me, continuing, "Just by looking at a person, we can tell what disease he is suffering from; we are able to diagnose the illness, which even doctors are unable to do it until they perform tests. We can do complete vaccination, complete. And some LHWs are even able to perform deliveries (i.e. attend birth) they are trained, our LHWs are."

In a similar vein, Reema claimed that at training sessions and other encounters with doctors, she had come to feel she was more competent than them, "recently, there's a clinic, I went there for training, and we had to take a test, and even the doctors that were there, were copying from me. I always get good numbers (i.e. test scores), always." Other LHWs claimed that their interest in and connection to people enhanced their healing skills. Samreen, a middle aged LHW, produced a long re-enactment of the tone of voice she used and the kinship terms she deployed to wheedle an aged grandmother in her catchment area to comply with medical interventions, "Ma," she said, "come on Ma, look your son is her, your grandson is here, we all love you Ma, take your medicine Ma, don't quit on us, Ma, our hearts will break, Ma."

Other LHWs observing Sara's performance told me that natural qualities made LHWs better than nurses and doctors at simple tasks like "giving injections," and "inserting the canula" (an i.v needle) into aged, or very sick patients. Meera took this line of argument further, arguing that God had given her healing hands (shifa), "many thanks to Allah, I am known to cure even those people who are childless couples, I won't exaggerate," she said, "from here (i.e. Karachi) till Punjab (a neighboring province) I am well-known, people send for my medicines, and by Allah's help, 100,000s of those who were childless, were able to conceive." When I asked her what she used to treat these couples, she replied, "I have some, my own homeo and herbal formulas. And it is just God's blessing, it is Allah's will, I am only a conduit, I work as a conduit, the power is Allah's, Allah is very benevolent to me."

In a similar vein, Salma argued that like doctors, LHWs also take an oath, and that they are both *ameen* (trustworthy, the word has religious connotations) and *zaamin* (guarantors, also a word with moral connotations) of health. For these reasons, she sees LHWs as mobile, portable doctors, available "in every home," but she argues, "they are not like those doctors, that just provide medicine, instead in the shortest time, and at cheapest cost, LHWs will provide such cures, as to spread joy and happiness everywhere." When I ask her to give me an instance of these distinctive cures, she says, "we focus more on mothers who breastfeed, we call on them at home, and their mind is made fresh by us, and we are able explain things to them as doctors cannot." When I press her to elaborate, she says, "for example, we get complaints, women say they are suffering from back pain. Then I'll ask, how many months old is your child? If he is two months old, and she can't carry him on her hip (because of the pain), believe me that the breast feeding is such a miracle (in that case), that if they do it the right way, the pressure women have right, in their backbone? For which, they have to get expensive injections, right? If only they feed their child in the right way, they will never in their life have this pain in the back." I asked her what the right way to breastfeed was, and she demonstrated, explaining, "the mode is this that, sit straight, and sit up, drink water yourself, one glass first, then from one side give him to drink for 15 minutes, then from the other side for 10-15 minutes. First when the child pulls right, water comes out, but when the baby pulls for 5 to 10 minutes then it comes via the veins, then, literally it sounds like *gutar gutar*, so then thick milk is coming, and when the baby pulls the milk then the whatever, it comes from the vein, and there is a system of Allah, the veins are gradually straightened out, so when sitting straight has become our habit then the back ache will be gone."

Such homespun advice, and folk-remedies not only allow LHWs to cast themselves as a unique

category of healer, but also, they suggest, helps soothe irate clients, ensuring LHWs receive a warmer welcome into the homes they serve. For instance, Hajra says that at times a client will answer her knock, “and will be looking irritated,” so at such times, “I say, ‘baji, you look very unwell,’ and then she says, ‘yes I am not well,’ she is irritable, then I say, ‘*arre’* (oh) you don’t take stress, tell me what is wrong,” now she gives me details about her illness, I give her a bit of advice, whatever I have at hand (medicines), I give it to her there and then, ‘take this, lie down for 10 minutes,’ for example if I have blood pressure medicine, I’ll give it, but I also make it at home.” I ask her how she does that and she replies, “Now if there is a blood pressure patient, she is getting irritable, I ask her ‘what’s going on?’ she says, ‘my B.P is up, don’t talk to me.’ I don’t say anything, I say, ‘do you have cucumber in your house?’ See cucumber is a useful thing, most people have it, coriander, green coriander is also present in every house. Plums, you know the ones we use to cook biryani, so if there is nothing else available, I’ll say, “*baji* suck on this plum.’ Coriander also works, not the leaves, but the stems, put it in your mouth, keep chewing it, keep chewing it, it becomes fiber right, so spit out the fiber, all the juice you got, you didn’t even notice, and you’re fine.” These home remedies, LHWs claim, make women more receptive to the National Program; “we told her one or two things (i.e. remedies) now her attention towards us has increased. Now she has forgotten her ails, she starts talking to us, she might say, ‘my daughter is going through this,’ now we have unlocked the safe (*tijori*) of her heart, then we turn our focus to her children, ‘*mashaallah* your children are very beautiful, you are taking good care of them, you are a good mother.’ Then the mother is pleased, and when you praise her children the mother is even more pleased.” These healing modes and remedies not only allow LHWs to cast their work in a moral light, they also help LHWs accomplish their relational ends, making them respected and highly sought figures in the community. Hajra, for instance, says women come up to her at social events and community gatherings, praising her to other women, “that remedy you gave me did wonders!” She says proudly, “they are very lucky, those women, who fall into the hands of an LHW.”

Holy War: a final schema LHWs deploy to recast the moral complexion of their labor is directly connected with Polio work. While the National Program required LHWs to work within their immediate communities, serving neighboring homes, Polio work takes them far afield, going door to door to administer the Polio vaccine in unfamiliar localities. Worse, since 2012 Polio workers have become targets of terrorist activities. More than 50 have been killed in the course of their work. But even as these security considerations caused WHO and UNICEF workers to withdraw from the field (in 2012 in the immediate

aftermath of the first spate of killings), LHWs and other Polio workers continued to fulfil their duties, braving bullets for fairly small stipends.

Hajra provides a particularly vivid account of this period. "The first murder that occurred," she says, was in the territory under her supervision, "after the killing, work stopped there, for three months," she says to me, in an awed voice, "neither WHO nor USAID were willing to continue, out of fear, no one worked, believe me, for 3 months, the (Polio vaccination) work stopped altogether." But then she said that a highly placed official in Geneva called up the Pakistani official in charge, "he said, no matter what it takes, I want polio (work completed)," he was especially distressed, she says, because this high-risk locality was also considered critical for the vaccination program, "Polio virus is very high in this area. But no one had the courage (to do it)." In desperation, the commissioner in charge asked Hajra, if she was willing to fill the breach, "I said, 'sir I will do it,' he said to me, 'look, if you do it, it will be at your own risk.' I said, 'sir I will do it." The next day, Hajra says, she "filled three cars, with Baloch and Pathan girls (local ethnic groups) and got off in that same area, (i.e. the one considered as a security threat), so dangerous, no one from WHO ever, ever steps out of their vehicles in those areas," she said, "they refused to send their staff to help us, saying that they can't work there, but I said, 'sir we will do the work, when it is a problem for our country's children, when we are working in all of Pakistan, all of Karachi, if one area gets left out, then it's like all the rest of our work in other areas is rendered useless, I mean, it will be like we did nothing, right? If even one child is left out, how will polio finish? We have to wipe it out, we have to save our children." So, she continues, "They said, 'daughter, it's like jumping into the well of death,' I said, 'sir, I am willing to plunge in.'" I asked her how she gathered the courage to step out of her vehicle and she replied, "I just went and did it, what I said to everyone was that the time of death is already fixed (i.e. fated), the day that is written for death, right? I have stepped out for a good deed, if I die in a virtuous deed, in a *Jihad*, (holy war) then I will be a *shaheed* (a martyr), and no one dies before the time of destiny. Believe me. I salute my workers really who worked shoulder to shoulder with me, we would board the bus, and every girl would recite *Darood Shareef* (a Quranic verse) and blow it on herself (i.e. as a ward) and we took the name of Allah and got down in the battlefield."

Like Hajra, Shehnaz also contrasts LHW courage with that of higher-level officials (both WHO and local government) mostly men, who she says are too scared to tread where LHWs bravely plunge in. Even the cops are cowards, in contrast to the LHWs, she says,

When a certain home in an area refuses to come to the door, the police that are with us, they get scared, they say, 'leave it, *Baji*, to hell with them, let's keep going,' she says indignantly, "but I say, No! I won't move until I get an answer to my knock.' Why? Because we know we have to make our work *halal* (i.e. purify our sustenance by doing honest work), if we don't," she argues, "then when we are sitting with our family and eating food, we will think, Oh Allah, we made our work into a lie.

In a similar vein, Laila tells me proudly about a time when a high-ranking government official was too scared to keep up with her, "One time the deputy commissioner (of Karachi) came with me on my rounds," she says proudly, "we got to one house, knocking, and no one was answering, so the DC says, 'okay let's go, they're not answering,' I said, 'sir, I have to administer the drops, I have to do my duty.'" Laila says she kept knocking until a man came to the door, rudely shooing her away, "The DC got scared, they fear that it might be someone connected to the Taliban, and he went to stand far away, on the other end of the street," she says, "but I stood my ground, saying (to the man), 'brother please'" she says in a wheedling tone, "I kept pleading, until he said to me 'mother, I don't speak Urdu,' so then I plunged in, I went into the house, which we are not ordered to do, I said, 'vaccine, child, sick, dead, finish,' and I did it, I administered the drops, the DC was shocked."

Descriptions of bravery allow women to recast the meaning of their wages. Mehreen says angrily that people are often rude to her when she shows up for her Polio duties, "they assume that I am doing it for the money," she says, declaiming, "Oh yes, I do get money, but how much money do I get? Why don't they take that into account?" Similarly, Reema says, "People think all we care about is money, of course, we do need the money, but we also understand the purpose of what we are doing, why it is important."

The purpose, in LHWs telling, is not simply eradicating a disease, but a sacred struggle*;* Farzana describes it this way, "take it that we doing *jihad*, for our children, for our families, for our husbands." Other LHWs cast Polio work, not just as a personal Jihad, aimed at providing for their own families' survival but as a higher level sacred battle fought in service to the community, as Meena, laughing, puts it, "No, if it had been your duty, and you had seen what the disease is like, if you had seen an affected child, you would not be able to sleep for two days." This framing of the work provides LHWs with honor and respect. Shehnaz for instance recounts the respect and admiration she received during a meeting with

Asifa Bhutto (slain former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's daughter and spokesperson for Polio eradication in Pakistan). "Asifa Bhutto asked me, 'you keep doing Polio even after getting shot at?' and I said, 'Yes! Because, I am a mother,' I said to Asifa, that 'I am a mother, if one child gets left out, how many others will die? So, I am mother, so I won't stop. If I get shot, I'll get shot, so what? ... So, she took my hands in her hands. Her hands were so soft, brother, she is something else, and it felt like my hands are encased in silk."

When I ask the women how they gather the courage to do Polio work, they say that they rely on their veils and Quranic verses to protect them. Mehr for instance, assigns an almost magical power to her *abaya* as a cloak of permeability, "I am known for entering even into no-go areas, where the police are scared to go," she tells me proudly, "so for instance, here is a road, on that side of the road is Ali Raza Colony. A person who belongs on this side of the road cannot go there. The person from that side cannot come here," she explains, saying that ethnic conflicts render certain localities off-limits to outsiders, "But I, I always put on an *abaya* and I go into that community." She goes even though she belongs to a rival ethnic group, but she says proudly, "they treat me with utmost respect. In fact, they send an escort back with me so that I can pass safely out of their area." In a similar vein, Farzana says, that whenever she is setting out to do Polio work, she tells her children where her important papers and documents may be found in case she does not return, "they get angry with me," she says, "saying, why do you always tell us such things, and I say, 'who knows anything about life, where and when it will end." Shocked, I asked her if she always set out with an expectation of not retuning, and she replies, "absolutely!" she envelopes her body in a *burkah* and sets out with the "*durood shareef* (a Quranic verse for blessing) on my lips."

Together, martial motherhood performances provide women with a crucial permeability, enabling them to penetrate into zones that other state and transnational actors fear to enter. The moral meanings of these moral performances not only provide unarmed and vulnerable LHWs with the courage to breach "no-go" areas, but also, LHWs argue, generate respect and safe passage within those unfamiliar localities, the denizens of which, women feel, glean the LHWs intrinsic decency and moral quality from their veils and their decent conduct.

Incompetent Bureaucrats:

But while LHWs deploy martial motherhood performances to generate connection within their field sites, their fidelity to working class cultural schemas restricts their ability to deploy performance styles suitable for activating networks or fostering relationships inside the rational, bureaucratic government offices that superintend their activities. In their interactions with various employees in health offices, LHWs come across as incompetent bureaucrats, ill-suited to regularized jobs within the state. In part, LHWs claimed, their humiliation in these spaces results from their bosses' antipathy to the LHW protest movement. They were referring to a series of intense LHW protests (including acts of self-immolation) that after several years of effort attracted the attention of the Pakistani Supreme Court, which in 2012 intervened on behalf of the women, ordering the government to regularize their contractual jobs and provide more reasonable wages and the benefits (such as pensions, health care, maternity and annual leave) that are common entitlements for government employees. When I met the women, four years after the court had rendered its judgment, its orders were at last getting implemented; the women's jobs were finally on the way to becoming regularized.

"They (the officers in charge of LHW work) are enraged," Faiza argued, "because they all told us, your status will never change, you will never become regular employees, but then we did it, we did the impossible, and they hate that." This antipathy, LHWs argued caused state officials to drag their feet and stall the regularization process. Sarah, for instance complained, "over and over again, they say, bring your credentials, your birth certificate, ID card, all the things, over and over again, I bring it and they still say, I have not got it, it's lost, its not there." Likewise, Sameera said that the data she'd had verified and entered into the government's computer systems had mysteriously disappeared and she was commanded to re-submit it, again and again. When women did bring in their documents, they said, they were told that vital papers were missing or that their files had been rejected because of filing errors.

On one occasion, I witnessed an encounter that reinforced LHWs claims about what they described as humiliating bureaucratic fastidiousness. One morning, half way through my fieldwork I walked into a room set aside for my use at a local health office, only to find it was already occupied. A middle-aged woman government servant dressed in very stiffly starched, expensive looking clothes, embellished with a great deal of gold jewellery, was sitting in an armchair in the corner, surrounded by a group of cowering LHWs. As I approached the door, the officer flung a file out of it; it went sliding down the hallway, the papers within it fanning out across the floor. A nervous seeming LHW darted after it,

whimpering apologies. “These papers are not in the right order,” the officer shouted. She then turned to the next LHW in line, “where’s your ID card,” she yelled. The LHW looking terrified, her body hunched, opened a plastic folder and pulled out her national identity card, handing it over with trembling hands. The officer looked at it, comparing it with a paper in the file on her lap. Again, she flung the file out of the door, “The birth date on your I.D card doesn’t match your school certificate,” she said. The LHW began to say something, “Madam,” she said, but the officer turned her face away, “Next!” she said, turning to the next person in line.

Startled by the officer’s tone of voice, the scowl on her face and her gestures, I decided to go and sit on the staircase in the hall. The LHW with mismatched birthdates came and sat down next to me. She seemed very upset. I asked her what was going on and she said that since the LHWs had been regularized as state employees, their paperwork was undergoing fresh scrutiny. “It’s my mistake,” she said to me, “why should I lie?” After she had finished school, Mehr said, her father had wanted her to start a job that had had a minimum age requirement, so to get her inducted, she said, he had bribed the school to falsify her birthdate and make her seem older. She had been too young to have an identity card made (the minimum age for acquiring an ID card is 18), so it was a simple matter, back then, she said, to falsify her age via her school documents. But now, she said, her ID card birthdate, which according to her was the actual one, showed her as two years younger than she was. This discrepancy was very important because Mehr was only 58 years old according to her ID card but 60 according to her school certificates. At 60, state employees are retired from their jobs, which meant that Mehr would not be able to reap any of the benefits, such as increased salary, that regularization was to provide LHWs. In any case, she told me, the state has decided that only those who retired after the year 2022 will be able to draw pensions and retirement benefits. Imagine, she said to me, I’ve given more than 30 years’ service to this organization and now at the age of 58, I can’t even hold on to my job.

Mehr was not alone in her inability to enact performative competence in these officer-LHW interactions. Hira, another LHW in her late 50s said she had lived in a village in her youth and that she had lost most of her documents when the local river flooded, sending water gushing into Hira’s house and into the trunk she used to store her credentials. “Nowadays,” she said, “in other countries, what a good system they have! Everything is computerized, if someone has a problem, it is like, okay, lets see, what is this person’s problem, then they will use the computer to solve it. But here even schools and colleges, who knows if they even maintain records, they will never provide you with anything.” Since the state required

LHWs to have only a primary school education (8 years of schooling) many of the women had not passed what are locally called, "board exams," and therefore had no diplomas, which centralized within provincial Matric and Intermediate Boards, may be more easily re-issued if the original were lost.

But not just school records, national identity documents were also onerous for working class women to acquire. The National Identity Card (called NADRA card) periodically expires and has to be renewed. The paperwork requirements to have an ID card issued or renewed, women said, are draconian. ID card offices ask for birth certificates, property papers, marriage certificates and a document testifying to the support of a male guardian. As Muzna put it,

> Don't even talk to me about the NADRA Card, if you ever go there (to the ID card office) and visit, you will realize what we go through. People start queuing up at 11 pm in the night, you will see, they are standing on the roads and footpaths, poor things, all night they are in line, they don't even sleep. In the morning, they are given a token. That too, only 50 tokens will be issued, otherwise they have to come stand in the queue again.

But without the ID card, she explained, one cannot get a job, a phone line or a bank account. The requirement of male guardianship in particular caused tremendous problems for women. Rizwana, an LHW in her 50s, for instance, wept during her interview, as she described the plight of her youngest daughter, Rida. "Her financial situation is not good," she told me, Rida's husband, addicted to drugs, did no work. Rida, who had had an arranged marriage, entirely engineered by her father, now had two children, a son and a daughter. When Rida first got married, her mother told me, sobbing "even on the wedding night he was high and he peed on the bed." The man was also violent, the mother said, "He beat her, pulled her hair but she didn't tell me, it was her friends who told me, eventually, she hides it from me, she says you've got so much on your plate, I can't burden you further." But Rida was unable to leave her husband, because as her mother put it,

> She can't get a job because she doesn't have an I.D card. Now she is married, her husband has control, he won't give his ID card to her (to support her application), how can she make it without him? If I make it for her, on her father's name, then

how to explain her children?

As working-class women, lady health workers were unable to enact the performative competence demanded by their bureaucratic bosses. Their inability to marshal the documentation these officials required, to file these in the correct order and to submit them in the appropriate forms (digital as well as hard copy) left them looking incompetent at best and unethical at worst. Yet, it was precisely the kinds of hardships that LHWs faced as working-class women, the difficulty of managing problematic husbands, or securing credentials in rural homes, of procuring official documentation, that allowed them to connect with their similarly positioned clients. LHWs bosses, on the other hand, were able to rely on the perks of their offices to get past some of these bureaucratic hurdles, which in any case are not stacked so high against middle class citizens. When I visited a NADRA office in my elite neighborhood for instance, I was allowed to pay a larger fee for quicker service. I was also permitted to vault past some of the more onerous documentary requirements because my mother owned property in Karachi, which was taken as evidence of identity. Gazetted government servants can also rely on friends and contacts to speed up their documentary processes. LHWs inabilities to get past these kinds of issues make it impossible for them to enact the performances that signify dignity and belonging within the government office, and therefore cement their exclusion from these spaces. Their labors on behalf of the state therefore provide them with only a nominal, **bifurcated inclusion,** a partial incorporation of working-class women within the state, which relies on their cultural competencies whilst simultaneously pathologizing their dispositions and casting them as incompetent.

In this chapter I have detailed the stigmatization and degradation LHWs experience at the hands of their families and communities, local bosses and global actors. I have shown how they respond to this humiliation by producing a morally charged performance I call martial motherhood. Relying on three virtuous schemas--- suffering, healing and holy war---marital motherhood works not only as a salve against stigma but also furnishes women with a permeability and connectivity that eases the conduct of their work. By emphasizing their role as healers and holy warriors LHWs tacitly shift the focus of their work away from its unsavory association with condoms and birth-spacing talk, (seen in the local context as a vulgar and problematic interference with divine providence), instead emphasizing maternal and child safety as their unfaultable mission. Similarly, by casting polio work as a holy war waged on behalf not only of their

own children, who benefit from their mother's wages, but also in defence of the nation's children, LHWs frame themselves in the irreproachable role of mothers, intent on protecting and providing, even at the potential cost of their own lives. By deploying kinship terms and the frames of motherhood and child protection LHWs are able to disturb the social hierarchies that would otherwise vilify women's public labor. Instead of wanton transgressors of gender propriety, these frames position LHWs as crucial agents of social provision---healers and warriors---who provide benefit to every life they touch. By cultivating connection wherever they go, LHWs lay the ground for the successful harvest of state and transnational policy outcomes, such as vaccine acceptance. In the context of Polio work, where the slow, persistent cultivation of relationships in aid of policy compliance is rendered impossible by the nature of the work (Polio workers frequent new and unknown neighborhoods and communities), LHWs rely on their veils and Quranic verses as shorthand of their honorable concern for the community. These virtuous performances not only allow women to breach gendered and ethno-political boundaries that are off limits to other state actors and their transnational allies, but act also as a currency of the connection that is a crucial conduit for the successful implementation of health policy. Martial motherhood is therefore a crucial performative genre helping LHWs to activate networks that they leverage in service to the transnational Polio eradication project.

Yet, moral frames that are efficacious as a salve against stigma in the women's families and communities can do little to flatten the hierarchies that subordinate them in the health offices and conference rooms that superintend LHW activities and mediate their connection with the global arena of public health. In these official spaces, the province of pedantic bureaucracy, proper credentials and not moral performance are the indisputable currencies of dignity and authority. Here, LHWs specialized knowledge and concern for their clients' various aches and pains, their familiarity with the domestic dramas that complicate birth control access or vaccine refusal hold little value against the state's onerous rationalization processes. In these official arenas, LHW's gendered, moral performances can only reinforce their marginality and strengthen their subordination. In such spaces LHW's claims of intrinsic moral qualities do little to mitigate their subordinate positions. Instead, ironically, these performances work to reinforce those constructions that cast them not as poorly recompensed laborers exploited by a male-dominated transnational system, but as voluntary workers, sacrificing everything in service to the child, and to the larger social benefit, as good mothers do and should.

CHAPTER 3

Hobbled Leadership; Gender and The Engines of Authority In The Pakistani Police.

Late in the spring of 2017, Huda and Sana, the maverick female bosses of a Karachi women's police station, were removed from their posts and relegated to desk jobs. While most police women I met in Karachi employed gendered performative styles: veiling, self-segregating from men, refraining from dirty talk, doing delicacy etc. Huda and Sana jettisoned these *purdah* (gender segregation) compliant modes, instead choosing to adopt the male-coded brutal swagger more common amongst mid-level police men, in this context: spitting, cussing, chewing tobacco, demeaning subordinates etc. in hopes of achieving a more lucrative posting. Lacking the college degrees, civil service qualifications and state-allotted splendour (fancy cars, marbled offices) accorded to high ranking, gazetted police officers in the Karachi police, mid-level male station house bosses, most springing from working class origins, routinely rely on brutal aesthetics and authoritarian control of subordinates to signal power and capacity. For many of these men the brutal swagger seems to serve its purpose, augmenting their reputation for competence and supporting their advance in the corridors of power. But in Huda and Sana's hands these tactics misfired. By deploying styles mismatched with their gender and class location, the two women wound up alienating subordinate women, who withdrew their aid in a simple case of theft, causing the women-bosses to get demoted instead.

These different dimensions of actor capacity, their aptitude for symbolic display work (e.g. burping, spitting) and for relational achievement (e.g. authoritarian control), may seem unrelated, but they actually intersect in crucial ways to constitute both, power[7] and exclusion, in gendered ways ---as Huda and Sana's failed bid for power shows. Yet, scholars of power and of gendered exclusion largely treat these intersecting dimensions of agency as discrete, with feminist accounts focused primarily on symbolic dimensions of agency, and power theorists on its relational aspects. Neither treatment can tell us how symbolic and relational capacities intersect to generate exclusion, as in Huda and Sana's case. How do symbolic and relational dimensions of contention come together over space and time to ease or obstruct classed and gendered actors' from entering and rising within relations of power?

The patterns of agency I encountered in a Karachi women's police station suggest that agents

[7] I use power in Weber's sense, as the ability to control people, events, or resources; and to make happen what one wants to happen in spite of obstacles, resistance, or opposition. Concomitantly, agency is understood as the ability to realize a desired goal.

engage in symbolic work not just to refashion norms and remake the gender order, as symbolic notions of agency would suppose, but also to signal an interest in joining specific networks of power. As I learned from my informants, working class cops do brutal swagger in this postcolonial setting not just to fashion themselves as powerful figures, but also to signal an interest in, and a capacity for joining a set of relations crafted out of the upward and downward flows of corruption money. Networks forged out of corruption provide a decisive path to power in this context, ensuring plumb placements and lucrative posting. Hence, Huda and Sana's choice of brutal modes was aimed, not at remaking the gender order, but at gesturing an interest in joining these decisive networks. Their failure to do so poses a theoretical conundrum. Why did the symbolic and relational tactics that work for men, miscarry when deployed by women? To address this paradox, I develop the concept of hobbled leadership, a matrix of gendered constraint formed at the intersection of official and unofficial, explicit and implicit signs and social relations that tempers women's performative styles and recruitment modes, complicating their movement up mainstream pathways to power. Providing a detailed account and interpretive analysis of Huda and Sana's failed bid for power, I unpack this matrix of hobbled leadership to reveal how symbolic systems and relational processes come together in space and time to constitute state power in gendered ways.

The Dual Dimensions of Agency:

Symbolic Agency: Agency is a vital concept in the feminist lexicon, useful not only for probing actors' options and contentions in getting past various barriers to achievement but also a crucial analytical entry point for understanding how relations of domination are dynamically instituted and upheld. Accordingly, feminist scholars have generated a great deal of insightful research investigating diverse forms of agency in various contexts. Three distinct representations of the concept have become especially prominent in recent feminist work. 1) Notions of agency as resistance (e.g. Butler 1993) concerned with questions of a subject's autonomy in the face of power, focus on how actors refashion norms through transgressive practices. 2) A second approach builds on the first to advance the notion of "embedded agency," a historically produced and contextually contingent capacity for action and meaning making, encompassing a range of practices that go beyond just resistance to include conforming (Mahmood 2001, Ahearn 2000), or what some scholars dub "compliant agency" (Burke 2012). A third approach relies implicitly on the toolkit model (Swidler 1986), seeing agency as instrumental it explores the ways that

actors redeploy existing cultural tools to further their purposes (e.g. Bartkowski and Read 2003).

Investigating how people refashion, conform to, or repurpose norms, all three approaches are concerned primarily with symbolic dimensions of agency. None delivers a framework for understanding how symbolic efforts (e.g. what people do to engage with norms) might intersect with actors' relational capacities (whether or not they can galvanize allies in support of their projects and contentions) to produce distinct challenges and opportunities for gendered actors. Yet scholarship has shown that these different dimensions of actor capacity are not only linked, they intersect with gender to generate barriers for female authority (Eagly and Karau 2002; Heilman1983; Prentice and Carranza 2002). For instance, scholars have noted that women deploying leadership styles rewarded when used by men, find themselves confronted by "backlash effects," or social and economic repercussions for disconfirming prescriptive stereotypes (Rudman 1998, Heilman et al. 2004, Rudman and Glick, 2001). Both men and women see such gender-bending women leaders as socially deficient, hitting them with labels such as "dragon lady," "battleaxe" and "iron maiden" (Kanter, 1977, Tannen, 1994). Women subordinates may be especially negative in their reactions to women bosses with gender-mismatched styles, a phenomenon that psychologists describe as the "black sheep" effect (Marques and Paez1994). But researchers exploring women's efforts to navigate these self-presentation dilemmas largely treat agency as an obstacle for relational achievement (e.g. Rudman and Phelan 2008), rather than taking relational capacity (the ability to galvanize others and to forge alliances) as a dimension of agency itself. Hence, viewing agency as a display of competence, ambition, and assertiveness, this scholarship remains focused on the symbolic dimensions of agency, where enacting agency entails violating (repurposing or conforming to) prescriptive norms of gender rather than conscripting others to create, enter or grow alliances.

Relational Agency: In contrast with the symbolic conceptions outlined above, recent work in pragmatic sociology suggests that being an agent can entail not just the capacity to act for oneself, but also to work on another's behalf, as an accountant or an aid worker does, or conversely, agency can involve pressing others to act for us, as Imperial centers did with their company men during the colonial period (Adams 1994, 1996, 1999, 2005, 2010, 2011) [8]. From this perspective then, agency is anchored within a problematic of

[8] For alternate accounts of relational agency see Callon and Latour (1981) and Clegg (1989). Seeking to undercut structuralist accounts of power rooted in the Hobbesian metaphor of the Leviathan, Callon and Latour favor a focus on alliances and strategies instead. But extending agency to non-humans (e.g. mussels) their framework fails to appreciate intentionality within agency (see

achieving and managing relations, accomplishing recruitment and control of agents sent far afield in time and space. Mobilizing this insight, Reed grounds relational agency within a theorization of power. Since relationships of recruitment are often hierarchical, he argues, agency relations embody power in the double sense of capacity and control (i.e. they extend capacity over space but require distant agents be controlled). To accomplish recruitment, actors must activate signs and social relations to authorize agency relationships (it is the emperor's clothes that have the power, Reed argues). Multiple relations of sending and binding give rise to "chains of power;" which comprise the building blocks of agency and domination in society.

But while this agency as recruitment perspective addresses the relational dimension of agency, it underplays the symbolic constraints certain agents might face in alliance making. After all, the symbols and social relations actors must mobilize to forge associations are often gendered and classed. For instance, research from Pyrooz and Densley (2017) suggests prospective gang recruits rely on various, often gendered, signals, such as tattoos, arrests, and violence, to communicate their fitness for membership to the group. In other words, while Reed's chains of power perspective tells us that agency involves recruitment, which in turn helps constitute power, it does not tell us how marginalized actors marshal gendered and classed signs to draw and bind associates into alliances and construct chains of power. How does relational agency make culture walk and talk in order to construct relationships of binding and obedience (see Alexander 2004)? And given that the various ingredients that make up chains of power in Reed's formulation----signs, social relations, space and time are all gendered (Moallem 2005, Deeb 2009, Karsten 2003, Koskela 1999), what are the barriers to this accomplishment?

In short, treating the dual dimensions of agency in relative isolation both, feminist and pragmatic perspectives can tell us little about how symbolic and relational capacities intersect to generate exclusion, as in Huda and Sana's case. How do symbolic and relational dimensions of contention come together over space and time to ease or obstruct actors' mobility within the corridors of power?

Hearn 2012), turning power into an effect rather than a project of collectively oriented actors. Such an account can be of little utility for a feminist project (see also Amsterdama 1990, and Collins and Yearley 1992).
Meanwhile, Clegg provides a stunning argument critiquing structuralist accounts of power rooted in the Hobbesian metaphor of the Leviathan, arguing that sociological accounts should draw instead on a Machiavellian conception that emphasizes the strategic, contingent and extentional nature of power. But this beautiful discussion is followed by what critics aptly describe as a baroque, overly complex framework that would be too tedious to use (see Flemming and Spicer 2005).

Agency, Power and the State:

If agency combines signs and social relations to constitute power, then the police, simultaneously spectacular brute force and ordering instrument, provide the ideal site for investigating how these dimensions of contention intersect to constitute state power and inclusion in gendered ways. The police function not only semiotically as a sign of the state's violent capacity (e.g. adorning state ceremonies with armed grotesqueness, see Mbembe 2001), but also enact and institute a set of relations that sort and bind citizens to the state in gendered and stratified ways (e.g. stop and frisk routines work to inscribe the hierarchies of the social order on marginalized actors' bodies, see Fassin 2013, also see Horberger 2018, Blunt 2016). One key way that social inclusion has historically been gendered and stratified through the institution of the police is via male conscription within the force itself. Male dominated, the police, like the military, have historically gendered social inclusion by limiting both, women's (martial) contributions to the nation (and hence the entitlements and privileges they can expect in return) as well as their political participation (i.e. inclusion in the violent agencies of the state) (see Steihm 1983, Bethke Elshtain 1987, Hartsock 1983, Enloe 2000). In the case of the police, male domination serves to gender social inclusion further by limiting women's access as clients and citizens, to the state's apparatus of coercion and control (for instance in contexts where gender segregation norms prevent women from entering male spaces or addressing men). In other words, if the police are a crucial component of state power, then women's relationships with and their status within the police force, serve as a vital index of their political clout in the state. Examining women's agency and capacity within the police force then provides a particularly fruitful lens for inquiring into the gendered constitution of state power.

In what follows, I focus on women's agency within the context of a Pakistani police station as a window into the state's gendered character. How does power come to be constituted as gendered in this crucial arm of the state? How do women come to be excluded from political participation despite their increasing integration within various state agencies?

The Aesthetics of Purdah:

Signs and social relations are gendered in three ways in the Pakistani police. First, organizational

hierarchies are gendered. Top bosses inducted via the civil service exam are almost all men (there was only one woman in Karachi at this level during my fieldwork). Most women were concentrated at the bottom, inducted within the constabulary to populate a cadre referred to locally as "rankers," those who do the grunt work of policing the public. A few rankers do get promoted to the intermediate tier, achieving "officer" status, but unable to climb more than a rung or two beyond that base officer level, they never come close in rank or status to the civil servants at the top[9].

Second, the logic of *purdah*, or gendered segregation, further bifurcated the organization by marginalizing women at the station level. There are three separate all women's police stations in Karachi, that dealing with gendered cases---such as domestic disputes, prostitution and female beggars, are marginalized and under-resourced. Not all women were assigned to work at women's stations, but those posted at co-ed stations largely worked as a reserve force, only coming into work when called.

Third, purdah operates not only at the organizational level but also at the individual, aesthetic level. Most women cling to a set of signs and practices indicating their fidelity to purdah norms (veiling, avoiding interaction with men, relying on chaperones etc.). *Purdah* aesthetics are not just gendered but also classed; policewomen see *purdah* performances as communicating something about the quality of a person's family background. Those who eschew these performances are described as wanting in delicacy, dignity and honor. For instance, Mumtaz, a constable with six years of service under her belt recounted the following episode to me as an example of her own modesty and quality in contrast with "low-standard" women in the force. Assigned to work with a team, Mumtaz said she climbed into a police mobile (a van open in the back) and sat down next to a woman cop she described as "a low standard woman" because unlike Mumtaz, "she was wearing neither a face veil, nor a *burka"* (a black gown, women wear over their clothing). To make matters worse, Mumtaz said, "this crude woman" was talking with the men, "using dirty language, all filthy talk with men." This kind of behavior was so unacceptable for Mumtaz that she said, "I, in shame, bowed my head," making it clear to her companions that this kind of talk was not okay with her. "I was thinking, what can I do, where can I go, such dirty things they were saying, and the men were laughing." But hunching her shoulders and hanging her head to symbolically withdraw from the environment wasn't enough. Mumtaz continued, "So when the mobile stopped at a red light, I got out and

[9] Those unable to pass civil service exams can take lower prestige commission exams and enter the force directly at the base officer level. As assistant superintendents, these people are able to climb a little further than jumped-up rankers can, but are unable to climb to the top ranks, which are preserved for bureaucrats.

went and sat in the second mobile, which was following behind us."

Like Mumtaz, most of the policewomen I met adopted various *purdah* aesthetics to signal their respectability. They wore black gowns and face veils when venturing out on the streets; most took off the gown and face veil when inside station houses, but kept a scarf on their heads, or a *dupatta* (a stole) around their shoulders. To go without any kind of veil at all was to signal shamelessness and a low-quality family background. Women also indicated their fidelity to purdah logics by rebuffing men colleagues' attempts at getting "friendly," and by seeking assignments that would keep them off the streets, and away from men. Laila, a constable who had been on the force for nine years said, "I keep myself very stiff," explaining, "if a male asks me even, that give me your contact number or this or that, I answer very briefly that I don't use a cell phone at all."

Farah, a constable working with the investigation unit, told me proudly that she stays out of the interview room when her male boss is interviewing a woman suspect. "They (men police) use very dirty language, even with ladies (informants or accused), and they know that I am not the kind who can face such talk, so they tell me, 'go, sit in the other room while we are doing the interview.'" Since women police are required to serve as chaperones for women citizen during interviews, her pride at abdicating this responsibility astounded me. I asked her, "Don't the *mulzima* (women accused) mind you leaving them alone with the men?" And she replied "no, they are different types, those women," implying that they lacked Farah's delicacy, she continues, "they know I can't face these things and the men know I can't face it, because I am not that type, I am from a good family." Another woman told me that she hated night work, "when I'm told to come to the station at night," she said, "I bring my husband with me, he sits with the men outside, and I go lock myself in a room with the *mulzima,*" she said.

Other women said they tried to get postings that would allow them to stay home as auxiliary, supplementary workers, only coming in to work when called for duty. When they did go out on security assignments (such as crowd management) that required working alongside men, many said they refused to make small talk with men colleagues. For instance, Laila told me, "if he (a male colleague she meets during an assignment) says, 'madam, your name?' I tell him my name. Then to make conversation he will say, 'madam, are you married or unmarried?' I reply, 'do you have some business, with my personal life? Stick to the duty, don't ask me personal questions." Hence, most policewomen I met, whether officers or "rankers" (constables) were strongly committed to various signs and practices of purdah, performing modesty in dress, delicacy in interactions, and decency through spatial and temporal segregation from

men.

Brutal Aesthetics:

In contrast to *purdah*-compliant women, Station House Officer Huda and Sana, her second in command, shed purdah aesthetics, instead employing a brutal swagger associated with mid-level policemen (but not women) in the local police force. This included cussing, telling bawdy stories, spitting, chewing tobacco, beating suspects, and demeaning subordinates. Both women dressed in flashy civvies, short, tight tunics and colorful leopard print tights. Unveiled, their hair was dyed in startling streaks of blond, and gold jewellery flashed in their ears and on their wrists as they moved. Oversized smartphones glittering in shiny cases were always ringing in their purses. Although very punctual about their prayers (many Muslims pray 5 times a day), which they performed with a long cloth (*chaddar*) wrapped tightly around their hair, both Huda and Sana would wind up their prayers by flinging off their veils, tossing them in a corner, and roaming around the station in their tight shirts, making crude sex jokes and coarse references to sex crimes. Huda described with relish times when she had beaten men civilians for ogling her, telling me, "after all, I am police, and they should understand police power!" Meanwhile Sana's conversations with me were almost entirely about sex and bathroom talk, fart jokes and sexual innuendo. Unlike the other women, Huda would sit close to men, crack dirty jokes around them, receive them in her room without any kind of veil on; Sometimes, she would be lying down on the carpet after lunch when a subordinate man was sent in, and she would talk to him without getting up or covering herself in any way. Both women freely used cuss words, *chutiya* (pussy), *madar chod* (mother fucker), etc. Whereas other women told me that they worked hard to preserve their decency in the context of the "dirty" police environment, Huda argued,

> There is no such thing as man or woman in the police force. One you join, you are not a lady, or a gent, I'm not a lady police, I am just police. If you're trying to practice *purdah*, you're not being honest with the job. If you want to be a gentle lady, stay home. Quit the job. If you want to work, then join in with the men. It's okay to share jokes, share food, and send messages to men (e.g. on the cell phone). That is how you learn the job. My purpose was to learn how to do things. If you are shying away from men, then how will you learn to write FIRs (First Information Reports, or

> police reports), how will you learn the tricks of the court, how tricky suspects fool you, the tricks of tripping them up? See, if you learn these things, the sky is the limit. Now, see, Arifa is the only woman right now, who has been placed as SHO (Station House Officer) at a men's PS (Police station). She did this because she is not trying to be a delicate woman. You have to leave the *nakhra* and *nazakat* (air and delicacy) at home. To work as police, you have to have *bharam* (an aura of power).

To achieve this *bharam* or aura of power, Huda not only worked on her personal presentation; she also sought to style the space of the station under her command. Most gazetted officers are assigned "side rooms" in which to rest and recover from the rigors of police work. But Huda as a jumped-up ranker, and the head of a marginal station, the woman's *thana,* was not provided with these spatial trappings of power. Undeterred, she appropriated the Interrogation Room anyway, repurposing it as her "side-room," she outfitted it to look like a bedroom. In it, she would recline on the floor, lolling on a *dastar khwan* (meal blanket) like a Rajah, picking up slices of mango with her fingers and dropping them into her mouth. She burped loudly and cussed often. The mangos were sliced and served by the constables, who grudgingly waited on Huda in imitation of the orderlies officially assigned to higher-ranking officers. Fiza, a slender constable, recounting her day's routine to me, remarked, "I'm a government servant, not Huda's personal servant, yet, all my time is taken up heating food for madam, serving madam, getting water for madam, I can't do any police work, I spend all my time responding to madam's bell, which she rings to order tea, or to tell me polish her shoes, press her clothes.'" When she wasn't eating, Huda would chew constantly on *ghutka* (a tobacco product), her conversation punctuated by breaks, as she spat out streams of red tobacco juice into a jar she kept by her side, asking her subordinates to fetch more tobacco, or clean out the jar.

Huda's gestures began making sense to me in the context of the broader social setting. A man officer I talked to about the style required to demonstrate wherewithal, recounted to me his first impression of his first station head, "This was back in the 1990s, when SHOs (station house officers) were a big "*bala,*" (supernatural being) he said. "I had to bribe one of the lackeys fifty rupees to get me in to see the SHO," he said. "They used to be millionaire, billionaire people, big shots, really big shots," he continued, "it was winter, SHO *sahib* was reclining on a *charpoi* (string cot), dropping dry fruit into his mouth, draped in a red shawl. He was a man of few words, he would give you only one look and a grunt,

and you only got a few minutes audience," he said, underlining the kinds of aesthetics these remote superiors deployed to index the magnificence of their office.

Huda's tactics were somewhat similar. The first time I met her, she kept me waiting for an hour outside her office. Later she told me she did this for two reasons, first, she was observing me through the one-way glass, getting a read on me, and second, she wanted to impress upon me "the power of her office." One time I observed a complainant brought in to see Huda after many hours of waiting. Huda received her in the side room, reclining on the floor and eating *chapatti* (flatbread) and *korma* (chicken curry) with her fingers. Her manner gruff and unfriendly, her questions sounding more like accusations than inquiries. Huda cussed freely, burping throughout the interaction.

All this was, she told me, part of the police atmosphere, the aura of the local *thana* (station), cultivated to strike horror in people's hearts. "The public dislikes the *thana"* Huda said, "they think it's a place of cussing, and spitting, wine and womanizing, a dirty place, full of flies. This is why women police are stigmatized," she claimed. Because what kind of woman would consent to work in such an environment? Her assertions were backed up by the horror my fieldwork invoked amongst middle-class friends. One woman constable remarked in astonishment about my frequent visits to various police stations in Karachi: "I can't believe it, you are unmarried and you have been going into *thanay* (police stations) that too without *majboori* (desperate financial need)? Wow!" Her comments echoed the wider belief that by spending time in these spaces I was spoiling my respectability and damaging my chances of marriage.

Stations are stigmatized not only because of the kind of people rounded up there, prostitutes and pimps, murderers and bandits, but also because they are often dirty and unkempt masculine spaces where men police spit, smoke, cuss, and tell lewd jokes. These conceptions of the police and the police station are shored up by various local representations in TV and film, where the police, including at times women police, are represented as brutal, violently grabbing suspects by the hair, beating them with sticks, colluding with villains, and trafficking in sex. The brutality associated with masculine-coded police spaces, reminiscent of the practices Mbembe (2001) identifies as the vulgar aesthetics of the postcolony, is carefully cultivated to drum up fear and respect for the police as vessels of state authority. But the aura of venality and salaciousness also make *purdah* aesthetics more urgent for women police, who insisted that only financial need had compelled them to take on such a dirty job, that being from good families they kept themselves as distant as possible from the stigmatizing environment.

But the stigma around brutality only attaches to station houses, the world of "rankers" and their jumped-up ranker-bosses, who have attained officer status after decades of working beat jobs. A wide gulf separates gazetted officers, who sit not at stations with the rank and file, but at headquarters, or Superintendent offices. As Shaheen, an ASP (Assistant Superintendent Police), who made it to his officer rank after three decades of ranker work told me, "the gazetted officers are a "different *makhlooq* (creation), they act like they have come down from the heavens." Gazetted officers are provided with hefty scaffolds of authority by the state. They work in shiny offices, milling with servile wait-staff, they are provided cars, chauffeurs, official residences and security detail. The officers' names are written in gold letters on a wooden board listing the names of their predecessors. Their offices are graced with a portrait of the nation's founder, Jinnah, usually pictured scowling. Gigantic glass top desks made of real wood barricade the officers from their guests. The national flag, flanked with police banners, hangs limply behind their chairs. A personal bathroom, marble, with high-end fittings, and flower vases, opens directly out of their rooms. A side room is provided for privacy and rest from the fatigues of the workday. Officers' are imbued with the capacity to provide "protocol" to guests. A guard stands watch outside the office. A personal secretary is employed to make sure you have an appointment, before seating you in a small reception room. An *orderlie* or bearer (wait-staff) brings in tea on china cups, sitting in matching saucers. Cookies are spread out on a matching china plate. Each time I visited an officer, I was fed lunch. One officer asked me what I would like, as if nothing was beyond wishing for. While we chatted, officers would field personal assistants and operators, play with at least two over-sized smart phones, deal with staff carrying in laundered uniforms on coat hangers, chauffeurs coming back with the stubs of bills they had gone out to pay on the boss' behalf. When they left work, armed escort vehicles would follow the boss' car with sirens blaring. The length of the motorcade directly related to the rank of the officer.

Huda had a rundown three-room station, no officially sanctioned side room, no flags, or plaques with her name on it. Her bathroom had a hole in the ground toilet and stank perpetually, the smell permeating Huda's entire side-room. Instead of the male founder Jinnah, her office featured a bleached-out portrait of Benazir Bhutto, the first and only woman prime minister of Pakistan, under whose tenure the women's stations came into being, aimed at providing veiled women with access to police service. In place of lengthy motorcades, Huda had a beat up little car she said was donated by the Americans (i.e. USAID). She said that various men colleagues were perpetually trying to grab her car for themselves. The police van under her charge frequently broke down. "When we run out of money for fuel," she told me,

"I drive down to any men's station and ask them, *bhai*, (brother), I'm out of fuel, and they will fill it up for me, they have other sources of money you see." There were no orderlies or bearers, not even a janitorial staff. In fact, Huda was frequently short-staffed. "Girls with powerful friends never come to work," she said, "we can't do anything about it." But then, those who did come to work were pressed into performing humiliating personal errands for Huda, a dynamic that served to estrange her subordinates, creating a problem of recruitment for Huda.

Recruitment:

Huda and Sana's subordinates did not buy into their performance of *bharam,* or power. Reading their displays through the prism of gender and class relations, they argued that the two women acted the way they did because they were low-quality woman. Understanding purdah as the provision of privacy and a form of class privilege, working class women cops enact agency, not by shedding their veils, but by asserting their claim to a privacy that their social location and masculine occupation robs from them. "After all, we are women too!" Lubna, a 35-year-old constable said to me, "the state just drops us off somewhere in the middle of the road, 'do your duty!'" she says angrily, "there's no shelter there for us, nor shade, no cover against passing men passing ogling us," she says, "so then, in that situation, our gown comes to our aid." From these women's perspective, the only reasons for dispensing purdah is either financial need, or vulgarity. Accordingly, women, like Huda and Sana, who jettison such gestures of delicacy and privacy, are assumed to be low quality women. "See," Meena said about Huda, she roams around without a veil (*dupatta*) which tells you her background is low standard." Echoing these sentiments, Fiza brought up a video that Huda had shown me on her phone one day to make a similar assertion. The video was one Huda's teenaged daughter had sent her mother while on an outing with her friends at Alladin Water Park. In it, Huda's daughter could be seen dancing, her long wavy hair bouncing as she swung her hips to the rhythm of a Bollywood song. Huda had proudly showed the video to all of us, commenting on her daughter's confidence. The women had looked at it silently, but later they told me, they were shocked at the young girl's behavior. "Did you see the daughter's *harkatain* (the things she gets up to)?" Fiza asked me, "She is totally out (of bounds), just like the mother." When I asked her why the video was so problematic, she explained, "see, you have come from America, things are not done like this here. These are the things that tell you a person's family background. Dancing in public, showing her hair,

moving like that, all kinds of people go to that park, Huda's family is out of control. It shows you what standard of person she is." Similarly, Meena connected Huda's lack of concern for *purdah* to her class position. "I mean, she is only Matric (a secondary school diploma)," she said to me, "and you can tell her *nasl* (breeding) is bad by her speech, and her dressing."

Not only Huda's aesthetics, but also her demeanor towards her staff, created recruitment problems for Huda. Ameera for instance, complained to me for several days about being made to polish Huda's shoes; "is that what I put on my uniform for?" she asked me. Fiza grumbled about being made to perform janitorial work, "I don't even do the cleaning in my own home," she said, "I've got a maid who comes in and does it, (maids are very cheap to employ in Pakistan, charging as little as $30 a month), but here, there is no respect for my uniform, I am treated like a maid or a waiter." When men in Huda's position deployed brutal aesthetics in a show of power, engaging in coarse behavior like spitting, abusing and violence, to feed into their *bharam,* or aura of authority their gestures were read differently. But their gestures were read differently. Right after I heard a woman constable receive a severe shout from her male boss, she said to me, in some embarrassment, "Men get angry, its okay, I can take it." Another time, a woman justified her male boss' harsh words saying, "they are *barey log* (big shots) it is their right to tell us off."

In short, by enacting symbolic agency and mimicking men's styles in a bid for a better posting, Huda and Sana sparked hostility amongst junior women, and were unable to recruit them to their project. These dynamics came into sharp relief in the context of a simple theft and bribery case gone wrong.

The Case:

One day I arrived at the station to find Huda and Sana in a fever of excitement. "We've got hold of a *bakra* (a lamb)," Huda said. "It's a *masoom* (naïve) lamb," she said. A well-to-do complainant had handed over custody of his maid to the women's station, accusing her of stealing a large cache of jewelry. Huda and Sana were very excited by this case, most of the cases they usually worked involved impoverished quarry unable to pay much of a cut to the police. Huda and Sana were convinced that the complainant was an easygoing prey, willing to cooperate with the police so long as he could get his stuff back. Moreover, they claimed that the maid, would be easy game, that she had stepped out of line only because she was overcome by the lure of opportunity, that she was terrified now that she had been caught and would be easy to manipulate. They said she would lead them straight to her accomplices, handover

the stolen jewelry to the police, enabling them to take a cut for themselves.

So, in front of my eyes, they let the maid go in exchange for a small bribe, saying she would return later in the evening. They were wrong on all counts. The maid headed straight to the railway station upon leaving that day, never to be seen again. They also misread the complainant. He had come in to the station one day, while Huda and Sana were away, acting as if he owned the place, inspecting the lock up and entering restricted areas. The women constables on duty made a half-hearted effort to stop him, but mostly they ignored him letting him roam around at will. Later one constable told me, she had sized him up that day, realizing he was well connected and had powerful friends backing him. But the constables never bothered to pass this information on to Huda and Sana. After the maid fled, the complainant began using his contacts to put pressure on Huda. And the only way to placate him was to conduct a recovery operation. Recovery operations are not uncommon in this context. The police rely on informants to sniff out accomplices and hiding places. Then, marshalling men, guns, police cruisers and uniforms, they stage a raid to recover the stolen loot. But organized in line with purdah or segregation logics, women's stations are not provided with access to the symbols or social relations necessary for effective raid making. Women police constables are not provided with guns or bulletproof vests by the state. Most women don't know how to drive. Huda had one police cruiser under her command, but this often failed to start. In place of armed men, she had a handful of slender, veiled women, most of whom took pride in performing delicacy. To conduct the raid Huda had to turn to the men's stations for help, paying them out of pocket to provide men, guns and vehicles for the raid.

Hobbled Leadership and The Engines of Authority:

Shortly after the raid, Huda and Sana were removed from their posts as bosses and relegated to working desk jobs in a data processing unit. In discussions of this episode with other senior women I was told that Huda and Sana failed in their bid for a better posting not because they engaged in corruption but because they failed to do so effectively. Competent corruption is the pivot easing the rise of police personnel to good postings, I was told. Sameena, a high-ranking woman, for instance, said that she was consistently relegated to lowly postings because of her reluctance to engage in corruption. "Some of the grandeur you see in offices, doesn't come from the state," she explained, "our bosses keep the operational budget for themselves," she said, "and we are expected to outfit the office through our own resources."

When I asked her where they expected her to get the money, she laughed, "you know where," she said, "I don't do it, that's why I don't get good postings, because when I come in to a place, I jam everything up, it all stops flowing because of me." Echoing Sameena, a senior male officer explained that in order to achieve plumb postings, "like a car jack you have to get fitted" in (i.e. slot yourself in the groove) to the corruption circuit, relaying money, resources, favors and connections up and down the hierarchy. These circuits don't just enrich individual officers, but also help to furnish offices, fill petrol in cars, expedite police work (e.g. by providing payments for informants) and provide food, transport, and other kinds of aid to low ranking cops (e.g. children's school fees, medicine for sick relatives etc.) (see Gupta 1995, Wade 1982, 1985, Jauregui 2014 who report similar operational and collective uses of corruption money by police in other contexts). To get plumb postings or to avoid getting ejected from good ones' cops must serve as a competent conduit for these informal circuits, relaying money, contacts and information up and down the chain to bosses and subordinates alike. The cussing, beating and spitting, Arif, a male police superintendent told me, is aimed not just at fashioning an image of the self as powerful figure but to communicate corruptibility; a desire and aptitude for corruption (see Jauregui 2014 who notes a similar connection between displays of power and corruption/corruptibility). Through these signals cops to recruit and get recruited into the larger web of informal exchanges that help compose chains of power in this context.

Recruiting associates is vital for three reasons. One, associates help to maintain and expand available *khanchas* (a Karachi police colloquialism referring to fonts or sources of ongoing income e.g. a steady cut from a shop dealing in contraband). Two, they help provide information about the "range" of a potential source of revenue ("range" is police vernacular for relational capacity, i.e. being able to call in favors from important people. Those deemed as being out of "range" are those with connections to people with clout, who therefore fall beyond the police's capacity to coerce or brutalize). Three, since the various practices of corruption, such as bribe giving, are not simple economic transactions but complex cultural practices, with unclear rules of engagement and uncertain outcomes, they are often coordinated by underlings (see Gupta 2006 who notes similar dynamics in India). Engaging effectively in the implicit, informal practices of corruption requires fine-tuned coordination between juniors, seniors and others (i.e. bribe givers). This synchronization helps foster trust and solidarity, deepened through gendered rituals of sociality and conviviality (e.g. hanging around male-dominated tea shops, smoking on street corners, boozing, visiting prostitutes, having barbecues) that not only mediate many corrupt practices, (see Osburg

2018, Schneider 2018), but also tend to privilege men and masculinity (see also Hasty 2005, de Sardan 1999).

Meanwhile the signs and practices of *purdah* make the chains of power woven out of corruption rituals and signs less permeable to women, constraining both, the symbolic and relational dimensions of their agency. On the symbolic level, the brutal swagger that signals men's interest and capacity for corruption misfires in the hands of women. When men perform brutality, they are indicating their "range," or capacity to call in favors, marshal personnel or move resources, a display that attracts recruits keen to latch on to a fruitful node in the chain of power. But brutality conveys a different meaning when adopted by women like Huda and Sana, who as heads of impoverished and under-resourced stations are seen as lowly pretenders rather than bold aspirants to power. The citizens and cases women's stations deal with, such as prostitutes, beggars and domestic disputes, provide fewer opportunities for unofficial profit making, leaving women bosses with less informal money for operational costs, fewer resources to barter for favors or clout in the broader informal economy and a diminished capacity for garnering obedience from subordinates. Indeed, hidden alliances undermine even the official, formal authority provided to women bosses by the state. Aliya, head of a second women's station, for instance, complained that "girls with powerful friends," would flout her authority with impunity, "they just won't come to work, there is nothing I can do about it, if I say anything, next day, I will get a call; 'so and so is my person, go easy on her.'" The remaining staff is stretched so thin that women bosses have to virtually beg subordinates to pick up the slack by pulling double and triple shifts. Accordingly, I noticed that unlike Huda and Sana, the women heading the other two women's stations in Karachi, deployed, not brutal, but conciliatory modes when requesting even official service from women subordinates, offering to chauffeur purdah loyal subordinates to assignments, for instance, as inducement for performing night duty. As Nasreen a woman district superintendent put it, "I can't tell you much sugar and honey you have to use, call them son, call them daughter, praise them, cajole them to get them to do the work."

Put simply, the engines of authority run on two motors in this setting. One relies on the formal authority encoded into organizational structures by official rules and laws to generate compliance and control. But without the added torque of the obscured second motor, corruption, this official authority is rendered hollow. Unable to vein into the hidden alliances and clandestine transactions that channel the flow of power across public-private lines, women are pitched towards a hobbled leadership. Impeded by gender from adopting the performative templates that signal corruptibility, and deprived of material

resources, like guns, men and vehicles, that facilitate undertakings crucial for generating informal revenue, such as raids, informant recruitment and anti-encroachment drives, women are filtered out of the informal webs of exchange that compose chains of power in this context. Official and unofficial, explicit and implicit, the gendered signs and social relations of purdah combine therefore with corruption to give rise to hobbled leadership, a matrix of gendered constraint that tempers women's performative styles and recruitment modes, complicating their movement up mainstream pathways to power.

By shedding purdah aesthetics, Huda and Sana sought to fire up a crucial, second motor of authority in this context, they adopted brutal aesthetics to signal interest in and capacity for joining the informal webs of exchange that channel power in this context. However, since their choice of performative modes were read as mismatched to their gender, these signs worked to repel rather than attract allies. Failing to recruit associates, Huda and Sana were unable to anchor themselves within the corruption chains of power that are the crucial springs of authority in this context

Successfully recruited junior women could have aided Huda and Sana in three vital ways, first, they could have provided information, such as by sharing their estimation of the complainant's wherewithal, which turned out to be accurate. Indeed, at other police stations, I observed subordinates communicating in detail to their bosses all that occurred in the boss' absence. Second, a loyal subordinate could have accompanied the maid when she left the station, making sure she did not flee. But if asked for such service, Huda's subordinates would come up with excuses. Her best constable, seething about being made to polish the boss' shoes, was constantly feigning illness to get out of work. Third, recruited subordinates could have done more to control the complainant, instead of allowing him in Huda's absence to roam around the station at will, gathering more information about how poorly things were run. Indeed, Huda's juniors did nothing to stem the flow of damaging information out of her station; instead they spread gossip about their bosses. I often heard the stories they told from women posted at other stations and at headquarters. Such tales did not seem to come out of the stations of more conciliatory women bosses who abided by purdah aesthetics and conciliatory recruitment styles rather than brutal ones.

The Clandestine Circuits of State Power:

In this chapter I have illustrated how hidden alliances; clandestine transactions and secret channels undermine women's participation in state mediated chains of power, even as the state works to expand

gender integration within its various agencies. Although induction and promotion within the police force provides women with a formal authority enshrined in law, their exclusion from the informal networks that channel material and non-material resources (bribes, favors, information) across public-private boundaries (i.e. between police and corrupt citizens), drains their symbolic and relational capacities and hobbles their leadership. Unable to deploy the gendered performative modes that signal corruptibility, and lacking the material resources that facilitate corrupt activities, women are locked out of the informal webs of exchange that are the invisible springs of authority in this context. Since men are plugged into these informal networks of exchange, their use of a gendered performative template redolent of power (brutal swagger), works as a resource for recruitment. But clashing with the norms of doing gender in this context, the same template miscarries when deployed by women, blocking their access to the informal motor of authority that eases men's access to power. Official and unofficial, visible and implicit, the signs and social relations of purdah and corruption combine therefore to give rise to hobbled leadership, a matrix of gendered constraint formed at the intersection of official and unofficial, explicit and implicit signs and social relations that tempers women's performative styles and recruitment modes, complicating their movement up mainstream pathways to power.

Although the interplay of *purdah* and corruption dynamics may seem uniquely pertinent to the Pakistani context, the insights gleaned from this ethnographic setting can be productive for understanding gendered exclusion and authority in other contexts also. First, while they may not abide by the rules and norms of purdah, signs and social relations in other social contexts are also gendered in various ways. In the U.S for instance, gendered signs (e.g. motherhood) have been shown to combine with masculine performative templates (e.g. acting like aggressive mavericks) and gendered rituals of bonding (playing golf and talking sports) to shore up women's exclusion in organizational settings (see for instance Turco 2010). When they come together, gendered signs and modes of recruitment filter the meaning of actors' performances--- weighing down women's enactments with the sign of motherhood for instance---- thereby diminishing their ability to recruit or get recruited into chains of power. Further research should examine how the matrix of hobbled leadership tempers the performative styles and recruitment modes of gendered actors, to impede their mobility in other contexts, beyond the Pakistani one examined here.

Second**,** since it is not the law, but extra-legal relationships and transactions that serve to marginalize women, this case suggests that state theorists and feminist legal activists must move beyond privileging law and policy in their investigations of state mediated gender exclusion and inequality. If

hidden alliances and clandestine transactions serve as crucial conduits for channelling power within and beyond the state, then changes to law and policy will likely do little to shore up women's access to political power. Without recourse to the informal networks that channel flows of power, women formally provided with leadership positions will still be read as dead-switches, less able to provide or elicit favors, generate money, or mobilize resources, they will continue to be seen as poor conductors of power, hobbled in their leadership.

Third, this case raises questions about the extent to which "chains of power" are also always corrupt. These questions are complicated because corruption is a loaded term, weighted down by orientalizing baggage (see Muir and Gupta 2018) that constructs its various practices as the particular pathology of the non-modern, less developed world (see, e.g., Musaraj 2015; Serban 2015). Yet, from another view, the "corruption" practices outlined in this case, such as the obscured use of networks to channel flows of material and non-material resources across public private lines, and the use of gendered modes of sociality to facilitate recruitment and boost solidarity have been identified as key mechanisms for the exclusion of women from power in western contexts also (see Jeffreys 2010, Turco 2010, Morgan and Martin 2006). That such performative modes, transactions and relations are not typically categorized as "corrupt" but instead largely dismissed as just networking or male bonding may be the result of Western ideological constructs that conflate relational and emotional labor with the feminine (see Osburg 2018) and corruption with the non-modern. Hence, this case suggests that shedding the baggage of terms like corruption may help reveal the similarities and interconnections between western and non-western contexts alike, helping to disclose how gendered performance templates in both kinds of settings combine with gendered signs to hobble women's symbolic and relational capacities and undermine their leadership.

Finally, while my ethnographic observations do not permit a full elaboration of the relationship between corruption and chains of power in various settings I would venture to suggest that chains of power may be understood as fundamentally corrupt to the extent that the signs, alliances and modes of recruitment they rely on are hidden, mystified, obscured, naturalized or dismissed as inconsequential. Hence, playing golf, having business meetings at strip-clubs, dining with politicians, providing funding, advice, or introductions through informal networks, all these activities and relationships make chains of power corrupt to the extent that these transactions and relations are the actual, but obscured, conduits for the movement of money, personnel, information, and other material and non-material resources across public and private, state and non-state, national and transnational boundaries. Further research should

investigate the extent to which corruption, or hidden alliances and secret transactions, commandeer symbolic systems and appropriate social relations, to annex state power and undermine legal channels and formal authority in other contexts, besides purportedly nonmodern ones. If chains of power are made of signs and social relations, then the task of the social scientist is not to map their various joints and fixtures but to uncover the hidden alliances and cryptic relations that are the secret springs of action and agency, imbuing signs and rituals with meaning to direct the flow of power.

CHAPTER FOUR:
Dead Goat on the Runway, A Performative Theory of Mismatch:

Soon after Pakistani aviation authorities cleared a particular set of aircraft for operations in the wake of a plane crash, airline employees performed a goat sacrifice on the runway. News of this ritual immediately went viral on the Pakistani media. Most television and social media commentators appeared bewildered, taking the news of a sacrifice performed on an airline runway as a kind of hysteresis (i.e. outmoded action). They argued that the sacrifice constituted further evidence of the state-run-airline's (and by extension the government's) ongoing ineptitude and backwardness. In contrast, defenders of the

sacrifice, such as politicians affiliated with the ruling party, claimed that questioning the efficacy of the sacrifice, a pious action, was tantamount to insulting "our" religion and culture. In short, the sacrifice exemplified a case where the scandal was not that a norm had been transgressed (see Adut 2005), but rather that it had been adhered to, but in the wrong context. And since both sets of norm audiences, those outraged by the performance of the norm and those outraged by the outrage, defined themselves in relation to their stance about the appropriateness of the norm to the setting, they wrapped the discourse about the sacrifice around a single axis, framing the issue as one about efficacy and fit, they centered an instrumentalist view of the action of sacrifice, adopting a vision concerned primarily with what an action achieves (or fails to achieve), rather than what it communicates.

In contrast to both these positions, women flight attendants assigned to labor on these potentially unsafe aircraft interpreted the sacrifice, not from an instrumentalist standpoint but from a relational and expressive one. From their perspective, the goat sacrifice signified neither outmoded nor moral action but a strategic, expressive kind of agency, a sleight of hand orchestrated by powerful actors to highlight a particular set of meanings and explanations about planes, safety, life, death, and airline responsibility.

Drawing on the interpretations of these marginalized actors, this chapter focuses on the expressive, dramaturgical aspects of the sacrifice as highlighted by women workers in the aviation field, to identify and address a theoretical conundrum. According to women's interpretations the sacrifice represented not outmoded (e.g. hysteresis, see Bourdieu 1977, 1980, 2000) nor moral action but a variation of what Alexander describes as "cultural performance," the social process whereby actors, individually or in concert, display for others the meanings of a given social situation (Alexander 2004). Yet, social performance theory (Alexander 2004, 2010; Alexander, Giesen, and Mast 2006) suggests match, not mismatch is a crucial condition for performative success. In order to succeed, this framework posits, performances must "re-fuse" the essential elements of ritual that have become disaggregated by modernity, in order to accomplish 'fusion', 'communitas' or 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi 1975, Turner 1995, Alexander 2004). In particular, various theorists have emphasized the necessity of what Xu (2012) drawing on Burke (1945) describes as *Scene-act ratio,* the match or fit between actions and set scenes. Why then, did the enactment of goat sacrifice by airline employees on a flight runway, a performance that violated the requirements of congruence between action and setting posited by social theory, succeed?

I argue that incongruent performances succeed, not by organizing congruence to achieve fusion or generate communitas, but by deploying mismatch to achieve disruption. Disruptive performances produce

cognitive dissonance and invite opposition, especially from rivals within a polarized audience. As rivals and supporters get busy arguing over the appropriateness (or outrageousness) of a particular discordant performance, other possible interpretations get tuned out of the resulting interpretive circuit. Thus, performative mismatch allows certain actors to frame events and realities by condensing the variety of interpretations available in the public sphere, and filtering others out. But since performative success rests not only on access to symbolic and material resources, but also on the social relationships (e.g. gender hierarchies) that permit certain actors to wield these resources in time and space (while constraining others), performative mismatch is an instrument of privilege, redirecting discourse in order to consecrate and reinforce particular sets of alliances and associations.

Crises and Action:

Sociological theory provides three key frameworks for understanding action in the context of crises or upheaval. (1) Drawing on Bourdieu, one important set of theories emphasizes cognition as a crucial motor of action. According to this perspective, action in the context of crises or upheaval is best understood as a form of hysteresis (or cognitive delay). Recently described as "a central problem for the theory of action" (Strand and Lizardo 2016), Bourdieu's hysteresis refers to a condition of inertia in the habitus (a set of internalized schemas that guide action), retarding acclimatization to a changed overall context (Bourdieu 1977, 1980, 2000). Expanding this framework, cognitivist accounts suggest that as cognitive misers, actors perform best when conducting stable, regular, habituated operations. In these steady contexts of routinized action, actors are able to rely on the unconscious, habituated, mechanisms of cognition, to carry them forward on minimal attention and effort, like a rider on an elephant (Vaisey 2009). But in moments of crises or sudden upheaval, the cognitive apparatus accustomed to routine, is slow to catch up with its transformed environment, leaving actors, like characters in a cartoon that do not know that the ground has vanished beneath their feet, to fall off the edge of the cliff (Lizardo and Strand 2010). From this view, the goat sacrifice on an airline runway may be understood as the action of a habitus, jarred by the crisis event of the plane crash, misfiring as it draws on outmoded schemas ill-suited to an unfamiliar context. As an explanation, the notion of hysteresis emphasizes the actor and the object of action, paying less heed to the various audiences who interpret and respond to the entire drama. Focalizing the instrumental dimensions of action, this framework underplays action's dramatic, expressive aspects. It makes mismatch about grabbing and missing, rather than about provoking opponents or

winning over supporters.

(2) A second framework for understanding action in crisis is anchored in Sewell's recombination perspective. This framework understands crisis as productive, not of misfiring habituses, but of improvisation. Individuals placed in the maw of rupture, this framework suggests, don't just fall of the edge of a cliff, but instead, draw on severed structures and broken symbols to construct new configurations of meaning and doing (Sewell 1996). From this perspective, the goat sacrifice may be seen as an example of "*jugaad*", an improvisational bricolage redolent of a "provisional agency," deploying a dynamic, resourceful, mode of "can do sociality" to achieve a temporary, contingent capacity for provision (see Jauregui 2014). But while the recombination framework does emphasize subjective aspects of action, (e.g. what heads on pikes convey to observers about shifts in power, see Sewell 1996) it remains primarily concerned with interpretation rather than promotion, actors rather than publics, instrumental action rather than publicity. As an explanation, the recombination perspective emphasizes sense making, not persuasion, hence it focalizes the object and meaning of action, not its ability to provoke and bind various audiences to a particular set of explanations and solutions.

(3) In contrast to the forgoing, cultural performance theory (Alexander 2004, 2010; Alexander, Giesen, and Mast 2006) provides a way for understanding action in the context of crisis and upheaval, not from an instrumental perspective focused on how actors manage transformed material conditions, but from a strategic one concerned with their handling of audiences and interpretations. Asserting that all social action involves the communication of meaning to others, and that in an era of intensified mediation, political success, as the attainment of power, (in the Weberian sense), often hangs on successful performance (see Atinordu 2017), performance theory highlights the necessity in a crisis context, not just for remedial or interpretive action, but for persuasive performance (Wagner-Pacifici 2010, Xu 2012).

As sudden, disruptive, obtrusive and emotionally charged situations, crises require speedy and apposite response from political actors who must act quickly to provide cultural "redress" and "repair" (Jacobs 1996; Sewell 1996; V. Turner 1974). Since the public must be treated as sovereign by modern states hoping to maintain their legitimacy, crises require apposite response from political actors who must match their performance to the affective tenor of the scene (Xu 2012) in order to maintain credibility and legitimacy with audiences. Mismatched performances can be costly for political careers. Recorded and replayed on various media outlets; discordant performances may not only discredit actors, but provoking outrage and shame, might animate demands for change. Meanwhile, apposite performances can work not

only to boost a political actor's credibility, but can also help shape the trajectory of the "chain of scenes" (see Xu 2012) unfolding in the aftermath of crises. Violating this action/context fit can lead to cognitive discordance amongst spectators, rendering the authenticity of the performance questionable (Xu 2012).

In other words, performative success relies on the congruence, or fit, between action and setting. Yet, there is a theoretical, and empirical basis for doubting this assumption. For one thing, mismatch, as the case of goat sacrifice shows, outfits performance with a number of qualities (cognitive complexity, comedic potential, opposition) that help shore up a media object's resonance (see McDonnel et al 2017) making for a different kind of performative success. Resonant objects not only garner more attention in the public sphere, they are also more efficacious at shaping media discourse and cognitive schemas (Ferree et al. 2002, Gamson and Modigliani 1989, Cerulo 2010, also see McDonnel et al 2017). Incongruent performances therefore, may well disrupt fusion and flow, but as the recent literature on charisma suggests, jarring, unsettling action also helps actors to seize the narrative, using cheap publicity stunts to change the rules of the game (Joossee 2018).

In what follows, I leverage this literature – which highlights the transformative, conductive capacity of mismatched action in the public sphere – and my ethnographic research to explain a case that predominant sociological theories of action in the context of crises cannot adequately account for: why did goat sacrifice in the aviation context, a performance entailing not just mismatch between action and context, but one collating a much more comprehensive assemblage of discordant signifiers (as I show below), succeed in violation of theoretical tenets? Drawing on the interpretations of marginalized actors within this setting, I explicate the various ways that discordant action succeeds not in spite of its failure to organize congruence in support of fusion, but precisely because it deploys mismatch or lack of fit.

Why Airlines? Performance, Power and the State:

If performance helps direct the flow of meaning and action in the unfolding aftermath of crises then a national airline, mobile symbol of nationality and gatekeeper of mobility, provides the ideal site for investigating the power dynamics of performative framing in the public sphere. Like sports teams and media products, flag carrier airlines circulating within and across national borders, comprise crucial sites for the actualization of national identity in transnational context. Indeed, it is because the maintenance of a flag-carrier continues to have enormous symbolic value for national governments that many countries continue to maintain airlines, despite the insurmountable cost of doing so (Thurlow and Aiello 2007).

Transcending national boundaries, flag carrier airlines, not only signify the nation in motion but for many post-colonial developing countries like Pakistan, national airlines, like PIA (Pakistan International Airlines), have long served to also symbolize the nation's forward movement in time, simultaneously suggesting the state's capacity for catching up with first world modernity, and cementing its status as well-resourced, mobile state.

Flag carriers' serve nationality by fulfilling both signal and ordering functions. Flight routes chart friend and foe, while the rituals and rules of ticketing and boarding organize citizenship in terms of mobility (e.g. how much and what kinds of payment are accepted, who gets to board first, what kinds of identity are required). Airline branding, livery, tail fin, and logos, helps objectify and commodify nationality, often with stratifying effects. For instance, the "Singapore Girl" branding of Singapore International Airlines, perhaps the most recognizable symbol of gendered nationality, concretizes gender hierarchies and stereotypes for internal as well as external consumption (Hudson 2013). In short, Flag carriers perform the nation through norms of hospitality and mobility, conveying crucial information about who we are and who we are not, both to citizens and outsiders.

In the Pakistani context, PIA has long served as an index of the state of the state. Public discussions around PIA track Pakistan's self-image over time. From enjoying pride of place in the 1960s, the airline today has become something of a national disgrace. Plagued by charges of corruption, incompetence, biased employee induction, PIA has come to stand in for the various shortcomings of the state itself. The struggle to define what constitutes appropriate action in the contex of a crisis involving PIA, might therefore, also represent a struggle over what it means to be Pakistani.

Dead Goat on the Runway.

On December 7, 2016, an ATR, a twin-engine turboprop short-haul aircraft, operated by the semi state-owned Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), crashed en route to capital city Islamabad, killing all 47 people on board. A couple of days later, Pakistani media reported that a Karachi bound ATR flight was cancelled at an airport in Multan city and passengers evacuated, following an engine fire prior to take off. PIA spokespersons denied reports of a fire, claiming that an unspecified technical fault had disrupted the flight. Following the Multan incident, the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority, a regulatory body overlooking all aspects of aviation in Pakistan, ordered all PIA ATR planes grounded pending investigation. A little

over a week later news reports claiming that the resumption of ATR operations was marked by the sacrifice of a black goat on the runway went viral amongst Pakistani social media users. The sacrifice, locally referred to as a *sadaqah,* represents a ritual widely used to mark gratitude or ward off evil.

Sadaqah, Arabic for voluntary charity, is a form of expiatory giving in Pakistan. People perform *sadaqah* in a variety of ways, often sacrificing goats, using the meat to feed the indigent, or donating money to local charities, such as the Edhi foundation, to provide food and shelter to abandoned and vulnerable members of society. People also give *sadaqah* at local *dhabas,* roadside restaurants where the poor are provided free meals. Individuals offer meat to eagles, diverting these predators away from little birds. They pay street vendors at the docks money to feed fish, and they give money at traffic signals to men carrying net bags filled with forlorn-looking birds, a ransom for the birds' freedoms. Many people in all my field sites suggested that *sadaqah* is a practice useful in warding off the evil eye, or in hedging against a spate of bad luck.

But in commenting on the viral story about the sacrifice of a black goat on a PIA runway, Pakistani social media users and prominent media figures framed the episode as absurd, taking goat sacrifice performed in the institutional context of the nation's flagship airline as an episode of disgraceful mismatch. "Good move. Fresh mutton on flight menu," quipped media commentator, Nadeem Farooq Paracha in a tweet. "Improving technology," a political activist joked. "No surprise we can't produce particle physicists," columnist Ayesha Sarwar remarked. Although less snide, more traditional media outlets were also critical of the sacrifice. The leading English language daily, Dawn, ran the story under the headline, "PIA: on a wing and a prayer." While on an evening news program with talk show host, Nasim Zehra, journalist Ejaz Haider joked that the incident suggested that when sociologist Charles Perrow was working on his theory of normal accidents, he totally missed out on *'kala bakra'*, [black goat] as a hedge against accidents.

On the same show, however, Dr. Musaddaq Malik, a politician representing the government of the time argued that not the institution but lower level employees, prompted by a spontaneous eruption of religious feeling, had orchestrated the ritual, which therefore as a form of honorable action was beyond critique. "In fact," Dr. Malik argued stridently "critiquing this gesture of faith was like mocking our entire culture and religion." The politician was not alone in arguing that as a "genuine" gesture of faith, redolent of local culture and traditions, the sacrifice constituted a pious action that was therefore beyond reproach. Indeed, in contrast with the westernized liberals shocked and outraged by PIA's apparent reliance upon religious ritual over scientific safety measures, this group expressed outrage over the outrage against

sadaqah. The sacrifice was not a misplaced action, these actors argued, lamenting that it has become fashionable to criticize religion and "bring down" culture at every turn.

This construction, as I learned in the course of fieldwork, obscured a crucial alternate interpretation of the sacrifice, one produced by marginalized actors within the aviation field, but only in strictest confidence and secrecy.

Mismatch from the Margins:

At the PIA offices where I was doing fieldwork, the mood amidst the media firestorm surrounding the black goat sacrifice was somber and aloof. A day after the story of the ritual sacrifice went viral, flight services staff who usually spent the day joking with me, seemed unusually intent on their work, studiously reading files, and tapping away gravely at keyboards. In the union office a few doors down, the ordinarily crowded room was occupied by a handful of staff. Two flight crewmen with union positions, Shahid and Ali, sat silently side by side, on a couple of chairs across from me. Mehnaz, a tall, good-looking, airhostess with a union position, sat aloof behind a desk on my right, sullenly working a mouse and staring intently at the computer monitor. Beside her, two more union crewmen were leaning back in their chairs, staring into space. One other union airhostess was standing behind Mehnaz quietly bartering flight assignments with someone over the phone. A muted, sullen atmosphere had supplanted the usual clamor of the union office. Samreen, a middle-aged airhostess, sat silently beside me, occasionally looking at her watch, she had come in today seeking the Union's help over an argument she'd had with a pilot. A young, freshly recruited airhostess sat beside Ali and Shahid, watching everyone with a rapt and nervous gaze, waiting to pick up her newly minted ID card, saying nothing.

After I had been sitting around in this somber hush for a couple of hours, Shahid a male flight attendant in his early 30s asked me how my work was going and we fell into a conversation. Shahid's wife was also a flight attendant, he told me, and he claimed that he faced a double burden, working for PIA and caring for his kids. "I've had to learn how to dress my daughter's hair," Shahid said, cocking his eyebrows at me sardonically. Ali, seated next to Shahid snorted, "hey, we all have learned to dress our children and get them ready for school." Turning to me, Ali declared, "you see, men also have it hard in this day and age." "Hah!" Shahid retorted, "your daughter's hair is easy," turning to me he explained, "Ali's daughter," he said, "has straight and silky hair, mine has a mess of thick curls and I can't tell you what its like getting her to look neat and presentable for school." Ali nodded, "things are not easy for men either," he

announced, “why don’t you care about our point of view?” he asked me. Although I was at PIA to talk to airhostesses, men crewmembers often elicited my attention, complaining it was unfair of me to focus on women, when men suffered a great deal more. Today, I laughed and said that maybe for my next project I would focus on men instead. Samreen sitting beside me let out a soft grunt. Looking pleased, Ali exclaimed, “Yes, you should! When we’re not flying, we take over where the wife leaves off, our lot is much more difficult than the women, we’ve got to do the running around, paying bills, fixing things, and we’ve got to care for our children too, we can tell you something about suffering.” Samreen, snorted but said nothing.

I suggested that this kind of job might be better suited to young, childless people. “But many crew members have children,” Ali replied, “Did you hear about the crew that lost their lives?” he asked, (he was referring to the recent ATR crash). “One of them has two children,” he said. Ali’s union colleagues who were listening in began nodding in agreement, beleaguered looks on their faces. “One of the children is 6 months old!” Ali exclaimed. “That is very painful to hear,” I replied. “Indeed,” Ali said, “but no one cares, the media are busy painting us out to be idiots, like we don’t care about safety, as if we don’t have children and parents we leave behind.” The union crewmembers, listening in, were frowning and nodding in agreement. Samreen remained silent; the young, new recruit was staring into space. “The media” Shahid said, “are gunning for us all the time, they just have it in for us, trying to get their ratings up with their negative stories.” Ali chimed in again, “did you see the goat story?” he asked me. “What was that about?” I asked. “It is nothing,” Shahid said. “Making a story out of nothing,” Ali agreed. Samreen began fidgeting with her phone.

At this point, Mehnaz who had been aloof thus far joined in the discussion. “Listen,” she said to me, “This is an Islamic country and in our Islam, we have *Sadaqah,* it is a good thing, we all do it. When my son was ill, I did a *sadaqah bakra* (goat). There’s nothing wrong with it.” Atif, the union man sitting next to her chimed in, “what people don’t know is that this is a PIA ritual, before inaugurating a new service, or when a plane takes off for the first time, the employees like to do a sacrifice, it’s a personal thing, employees did it, not PIA” the other union man sitting beside Mehnaz nodded. “Hindus, before they start something new,” Atif continued, “they smash a coconut on the floor,” he turned to the others, noting their reactions, Mehnaz nodded in agreement. “You must have seen this,” Atif went on, “on TV. They have priests and they smash coconuts.” Mehnaz continued, “We saw a video,” she said, “I can show you,” fingering her cell phone, “in Buddhist countries, they burn incense in the cockpit, they have icons of

Buddha propped up in the cockpit," she continued. "So?" Mehnaz asked, "Isn't this an Islamic country?" She looked around the room. Samreen remained quiet; the young, new recruit was smiling nervously. The union men and women nodded. "Why is everyone making an issue out of the sacrifice?" She said as if making a speech, "why is it that when it's Islam, we are negative?" she asked angrily.

"So, it's kind of like when people smash champagne bottles on the hull before a ship's maiden voyage," I asked. Mehnaz shrugged, "this is an Islamic country", she said, emphasizing "Islamic." With that she turned back to her work. "Don't you do *sadqah*?" Ali asked me, his eyebrows cocked. Before I could respond to what felt like a challenge, a couple of weary looking peons brought in several trays of food. Steaming, steel dishes piled with lentils, rice and chicken curry paid for by the union, were laid on the coffee table in the center of the room. Naan bread quartered and arranged in piles was placed at the corners. The men began to crowd around the food, filling up their plates. The women remained seated, ignoring the aroma of curried chicken. I decided to repair to the ladies' bathroom down the hall to write up field notes and escape further questions about my *sadqah* practices.

Samreen joined me in the bathroom a short while later. The ladies' bathroom comprised a mid-sized outer room, where a chair stood next to a window in the corner. The facilities were inside a much smaller cubicle; within which a hole in the floor kind of toilet was constructed face to face with a western toilet. Samreen settled herself down on the chair in the outer room and pulling out a long, slim cigarette, began puffing smoke out of the window. "Listen," she said, turning to me, "This talk of *sadaqah,* is nothing. They're flinging dust in your eyes," she brushed tobacco off her tongue. "Charity is personal," she continued, "I give charity to poor neighbors, and I help out poor relatives," she claimed. "But is it right for PIA, an institution to be doing this?" she asked. "They should check their planes instead of sacrificing goats. This sacrifice was just about throwing dust in our eyes, they don't care about safety," she said angrily. I just nodded, a little taken aback. She continued, "and what do these union men know about suffering?" she asked derisively. "They are all with each other, friends," she said emphatically. "They ply their seniors with booze, then they say, 'assign me my favorite girl to serve on my flight,'" she said, imitating their supposed petulant style. "They juggle their shifts when they don't want to fly; ask me, I have to fly on the ATRs. Everything they were telling you, it's all nonsense." She said. "They were using the goat to take the burden off their shoulders, and they did it."

Over the next few weeks I found this pattern of responses to the goat-sacrifice repeated in my conversations with various flight crew. Like Samreen, there were many who practiced goat sacrifice in their

personal lives but argued the gesture was mismatched in the aviation context. But this definition of the sacrifice as match or mismatch varied by social location. Airhostesses like Samreen, who did not hold union positions and had less power to dictate schedules and assignments, described the goat sacrifice as out of place in the institutional context, incongruous within the context of aviation and a poor institutional strategy for ensuring the safety of hundreds of people. A more appropriate sequence of actions in the wake of ATR incidents, these women suggested, would be to test the planes and replace those beyond the remedy of repair. Claiming that they had experienced many safety incidents on different PIA planes, these women expressed fear for their own safety and anger at the institution's apathy. Faiza, a 35-year-old mother of two, for instance, recounted an ATR flight she had served on in the wake of the crash. "Our training, they have taught us that take-off and landing, those are the two most dangerous, so all through the take-off I was peering out of the window," she said, miming this action, "the flight was taking off, and I was just scanning, looking, is there smoke, is there a fire? Is everything okay?" She said beginning to tear up. Fearful that ATRs were unsafe, these women decried the goat-sacrifice as an empty rhetorical gesture that sought to use ritual as a substitute for safety procedures. Yet these same women were wont to practice goat-sacrifice in their personal lives, only considering the practice misplaced in the institutional context. For instance, one day, Mahira had been agitated, pacing up and down the room, telling the other women that she had had a spate of bad luck that day. "Everything is going wrong with me today, when I was setting out of the house, flat tire. Then I got late. I was rushing here, and I slipped on the stairs. Look at my phone," she said, holding up a large Samsung smartphone with a broken screen." Without missing a beat, the other women said, "perform *sadaqah."* "Yes, that's what I'll have to do," she nodded.

On the other hand, airhostesses occupying union positions were very unlikely to describe the episode of goat sacrifice as a case of mismatch, arguing that in the context of an Islamic country, the action was in alignment with faith based values and with the belief that only God controlled life and death. "Death is the truth (*barhaq*)," these women would say, "life and death are in God's hands," they argued, and all we can do, "is pray, practice charity and be a good person." Maintaining that they frequently practiced *sadaqah* in personal life, union women claimed that there is nothing wrong with such pious practice. In interpreting the crash in this way, Union women were reinforcing a message in circulation within PIA that the airline is not responsible for loss of life or plane safety because life and death are ultimately in the hands of God.

In contrast to the complacent position of union women, non-Union airhostesses understood the

episode as mismatch because ill-suited to the context of aviation. Nimra, a 35-year-old mother of two, cited jokes she had come across on the Internet to ridicule the gesture of sacrifice; "if they're now doing goats as insurance, why stop there?" she asked sarcastically. "They should learn about aviation from truck drivers, go ahead and hang a shoe from the plane's bumper," She suggested derisively. "Tell them to hang a black scarf on the wing, paint an eye on the dashboard," she said laughing, "and get rid of the PIA logo, write: 'oh evil eyed one, don't eye my plane' up on the tail!" The dangling shoe, the black cloth, the eye icon and the slogan are propitiatory wards displayed prominently on many Pakistani trucks as a hedge against evil forces. By connecting the goat sacrifice to this broader set of superstitious practices associated with truck drivers, seen locally as uneducated rustics, Nimra underscored the disjuncture, she experienced, when thinking about a bloody sacrifice conducted within the diachronically organized, rationalized space of the runway.

But airhostesses did not just mock the sacrifice as mismatched; they also read it as a meaningful, rhetorical gesture choreographed to reaffirm existing social relations and organizational practices. "They are flinging dust in your eyes," Samreen contended. "These are the games of stupid men," Nimra said, "it was a signal they were sending to one another," she explained, "They are shrugging responsibility and making a fool out of us," Faiza insisted. The women's notion that the sacrifice was choreographed and staged is illuminated by a consideration of the broader relations of power and patronage structuring this context.

Politics, Power and Patronage:

From the earliest days of my fieldwork at PIA, participants would tell me that PIA was subject to entropy fanned by politics and corruption. In the good, old, days of the 1960s and 1970s, this narrative would argue, PIA was a fountain of national pride, it was the "favorite airline of Jackie Kennedy," one crewmember insisted, a look of awe in her eyes. "In the old PIA, they had picked classy employees, hired on merit," another crewmember said. "Back then, intelligence agents would actually go over to our neighborhoods to inquire about our background before we were inducted into PIA," a senior airhostess, now working in ground operations said. But over time, the entropy narrative suggested, politics had ruined PIA in several ways. First, politicians ruined PIA, staff grumbled, by demanding special treatment, delaying flights at their whim, bringing too much luggage on board, or arbitrarily rerouting flights and interfering with schedules. Media reporting backed up these claims of whimsical interference, for instance, in July

2016 newspapers reported that over 26 million rupees (around US$ 240,000) were spent to repurpose a PIA plane and bring the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his camp office back home from a personal trip to London aboard a VVIP flight diverted from its regular route by the prime minister.

Second, PIA employees claimed that ministers and government officials were wont to whimsically override merit-based procedures, using the power of their office to guarantee PIA jobs to their lackeys. As a semi-state-owned organization, PIA is a very attractive employer guaranteeing employees a kind of tenure over their positions, ending only with retirement, when sizeable pensions and retirement packages would come into effect. Moreover, PIA staff enjoyed many perks, including free tickets for air travel, grooming allowances, travel allowances, and transport to and from work. Political support has to be paid for, and by handing out plumb jobs and positions to their devotees; successful candidates are able to pay for the support rendered without drawing on their own pockets.

Third, politicians interfered with the workings of the PIA through the union. Union workers, I was told, are all affiliated with major political parties, which is how they came to obtain positions on the union. “This one is a Pakistan Muslim League man,” an airhostess told me, pointing to Atif the union boss. Her contention was confirmed when I asked Atif about the tiger icons scattered around the union office, including a tiger poster on the wall and a tiger statue up on the curtain pelmet. “The tiger is Nawaz Sharif’s election symbol,” he replied. “The statue was an actual gift from Nawaz Sharif himself,” he crowed. Sharif was Prime Minister of Pakistan during the time I was doing my fieldwork. Other union officials, various airhostesses informed me, were affiliated with other parties, including the Pakistan People’s Party now led by the late Benazir Bhutto’s husband. Political connections provide staff with the ability to rig the workings in their own favor. Well-connected staff, I was told, can frequently go “NA” (or not available), absenting themselves from work without explanation and with no repercussions to their employment. One crewman crowed, for example, about how his close friendship with a prominent politician not only helped him get the highly-prized job as cabin crew, but also to get extended paid leave when he needed it, and to opt out of certain training sessions. Hence, political influence provides well-placed actors with the flexibility to maneuver around rules, to haggle over schedules or evade certain routes and ensure assignment on others, and to avoid disciplinary action when they failed to turn up for work. Actors unable to marshal the influence of strong politician friends say they are wracked with fear for their jobs, left to shoulder the burden of colleagues who do not show up for work or who pull strings to get plumb routes.

For these and other reasons, including charges of corruption made in the “Second Interim Report

on PIA Performance," (presented to the Pakistan Senate in March 2017), the airline has been incurring heavy losses for years. Its financial performance is something of a local scandal. But when various governments have sought to improve efficiency by disrupting PIA's relative monopoly over domestic routes, or by privatizing the airline, the unions, fearing loss of job security and pensions, and all the benefits of political involvement within the airline, have been known to go on backbreaking strikes bringing entire airports to a standstill. Given these financial and political entanglements, and PIA's relative monopoly over certain domestic routes, including those served exclusively by ATR aircrafts, the airline cannot really afford to suspend ATR operations, or replace old planes with new ones, or even invest in lengthy safety checks.

The union is entangled in all these issues, reluctant to give up the job security and the personal power ensured by the existing configuration of organizational practices, which would be undermined if the organization were to become privatized. Privatization would entail the rationalization of various processes, such as hiring, scheduling, promotions and training. It would provide a firmer footing for rationalized logics associated with corporatization, subservient to different relational arrangements and hierarchies and it would displace the local system of political patronage and favoritism that provides union bosses and influence-wielding crewmembers with various forms of power. Such a transformation would curtail these actors' capacity for using personal connections to powerful politicians, instead forcing them to abide by rules based on merit rather than influence. It is within this broader terrain of political patronage and union jerry rigging that non-union airhostess interpreted the episode of goat-sacrifice as a rhetorical gesture. Their notion that the sacrifice was choreographed and staged is strengthened by a consideration of the image[10] that went viral in local and international newspapers bringing the sacrifice to international attention.

The Viral Image:

The photograph features six men, a dead goat, and an aircraft. In the foreground, three men squat around the goat's semi-decapitated carcass, like hunters displaying their trophy. The main character, a bald man, crouches on the ground, pressing down on the goat's amputated head with his left hand. In his right hand, a knife is held frozen, as if caught in the act of slicing. Next to him, a second man, crouches

[10] The image is searchable online, using keywords, "PIA," "goat," "sacrifice".

awkwardly; his head turned away as if reluctant to reveal his face to the camera. To his right, a third squatting figure holds down the dead goat's front hoof, grinning at the knife holding man, who smiles back. Behind this crouching trio, the photograph's middle ground is occupied by three bystanders: a bearded onlooker stands on the left, his body cropped in half by the picture's frame, next to him, two other figures stand in postures conveying profound disinterest for the drama unfolding at their feet-- one stares down into his cell phone, looking bored, the other, a security guard, stands aloof, arms folded behind his back, looking away from the camera and the goat, out of the photograph's frame. In the background, a turboprop plane fills the frame, looming in absurd juxtaposition to the panorama of religious ritual. No women are featured in the photograph.

In contrast with media and union women's narratives, which focalized instrumentalist dimensions of the sacrifice, the photograph's various elements --- the arrangement of bodies, the posed stances of the figures (e.g. simulating cutting), the props (cell phone, knife, turboprop plane) and the facial expressions (both the smirks of the cutters, and the indifference of two of the bystanders) -- mark the sacrifice as tableau, a cultural performance concerned with audiences rather than objective conditions. Yet, the same elements, jarring in their mismatched juxtaposition, bespeak an action-setting disjuncture out of step with theoretical expectations; which posit congruence, especially between action and setting (referred to as scene-act-ratio, see Xu 2012) as crucial to performative success. In violation of these theoretical tenets, the sacrifice tableau succeeds, not by seamlessly bringing together the various elements of performance, but by deploying incongruence instead. Indeed, it is precisely the mismatch between action and context that appears to have generated virality for the image. One news channel, for instance, ran the story of the sacrifice as breaking news, their reporter pondering on live TV, the peculiarity of sacrifice, conducted on behalf of inanimate objects, such as airplanes. Other channels peppered coverage of the ritual with inserts of the photograph, rotating amidst sound effects on text slides asking, "what color was the goat?" "Who paid for it?" "Will goat sacrifice now become part of official take off procedure?"

In short, while mismatch may be productive of an affectively charged, cognitive dissonance, that can disrupt flow, it can also, as the goat sacrifice case shows, give rise to conditions scholars consider ideal for the production of resonance (see McDonnell et al. 2017). For one thing, the absurdity of sacrifice as remedial action tied in with existing schemas about the almost laughable ineptitude of the state's various institutions, including the PIA, to make the performance resonant for news commentators and audiences alike. Second, the ludicrousness of the sacrifice made this action into an entertaining puzzle, one requiring

humorous unpacking from media experts and political commentators. One comic known for his sarcastic political video rants, for instance, tried to understand how the goat got on the runway in the first place, "they're saying it was the heart-felt action of an individual employee," he said, asking, "how did this guy get on to the runway with a goat and a sword? If I carry a tiny lighter, all kinds of alarms go off, the entire Airport Security Force gets deployed just to confiscate my lighter, how did this guy carry a knife onto the runway?" Such hilarious tirades kept the story alive for days, probing various elements of the sacrifice for meaning, asking for instance, what the color of the goat meant: "the goat must be wondering, man, am I a goat or an iPhone? Why does everyone want black, why can't they ever pick rose gold?" Thus, while mismatch may be productive of cognitive dissonance, disruptive of verisimilitude, damaging for actor credibility and upsetting of flow (Xu 2012, Alexander 2004), it appears nevertheless to help a performance achieve resonance (McDonnell et al. 2017), making for a different kind of success.

In a fractured, contentious and highly mediated contemporary public sphere, performances are not just instruments of legitimacy; they are also crucial levers in the symbolic battle over meaning. Crises situations in particular require political actors to work fast, grappling not only with cynical audiences and sceptical experts, but also with the possible responses and counter-performances of rivals and adversaries, generating reactions that enhance or distort the meaning of a particular political performance. In this context, success may at times require, not fusion, but resonance. Not only does resonance provide media objects with the ability to break past the noise of a saturated public sphere, it can also make media objects more effective at framing, enhancing their ability to shape both, media discourses (Ferree et al. 2002, Gamson and Modigliani 1989) as well as the broader cognitive schemas individuals use to interpret the world around them (Cerulo 2010). Thus, while congruent performances may help recognizable personalities boost political careers by shoring up credibility through fusion, mismatched ones may help provide anonymous actors, such as the sacrifice performers, to redirect discourse by boosting message resonance through dissonance and disruption.

Indeed, not just action and setting are mismatched in the sacrifice photograph. The image accumulates a slew of disjunctive signs—both of absence and presence. For one thing, in stark contrast with conventional scenes of ritual slaughter in Karachi, such as those occurring on the festival of Eid, the image of runway-sacrifice is startling for its frugality of objects and markings. The sacrificial animal is untouched by garlands, henna, or any kind of ritual marking. Instead, the scene is marked by a lack of objects, the absence of any kind of paraphernalia common to sites of ritual slaughter in Karachi; chopping block,

trough of water, stalks of animal feed, plastic bags or pots to gather the meat--- where will the carcass go after this frozen moment? Will they drag the goat off afterwards and just leave it to the side; will they carry it onto the plane? The setting seems to convey the remnants of a perfunctorily arranged ritual. Did this entire scene just go up for the camera, like a fairground photo?

The mood conveyed by the actors' postures and expressions also appears incongruous, different from the sacrifices I've watched in Karachi's neighborhoods, conducted by sober and grim looking men, appearing a little worried that they won't get it quite right. In these other sacrifices I've watched, people coordinating a sacrifice often talk each other anxiously through the process, conveying a nervous kind of gravity perhaps reasonable to expect around a pious practice involving an all-powerful deity and an offering of life. But in this image, the two main men, unmarked by any signs of piety-- skullcap, beard--- grin, looking more like tourists, who paused to pose with a spectacle, than actors communicating with God through blood and carcass. The entire mise en scene is stark in its lack of embellishment, casual, as one would never expect a ritual sacrifice to be. The most potent sign vehicle in the entire image is the bloody goat. Perhaps in McLuhan's over used (1964) phrase then, the medium, in this case sacrifice, is the message, invoking religion through the body of a goat.

What message does ritual as a medium convey? Sacrifice, Agamben suggests (2009) is an apparatus that activates and regulates separation, moving things, places and being from the mundane to the sacred realm. From this view, the sacrifice was aimed at sanctifying the aviation context, transporting the runway into a sacred arena where agency is not human but divine. But to work, such transportation would require a more faithful adherence to ritual. To produce cures, or transform mundane to sacred objects, ritual enactors need to make their performance believable (see Alexander 2004) they need to fuse actors, audience and action by aligning action and context- not jar audiences with mismatched and dissonant displays. Instead of acceptance and belief, however, the runway-sacrifice generated questions and derision from a set of audiences bewildered by the obtrusive mismatch between action and context.

Rather than transporting planes and runways into sacred space, I would argue, the separation that goat sacrifice accomplished in this case was a relational one. Rituals, after all, are not just apparatus of material conversion; they are also ordering instruments, sorting actors into categories—separating sacrificers, for instance, from sacrificees, performers from observers, coordinators and executors, from those relegated to observe silently from the margins. Rituals don't only generate communitas they also institute social division. And one division historically instituted by ritual is gender, a structure produced

and reproduced through the myriad quotidian rituals of mating, caring and protecting (see Lorber 1994) that continue to shape political performance through gender taboos in the public sphere.

There are no women in the image. Sacrifice, in this context, as in many others, is a gendered performance. Although women may pay for goat sacrifice in their personal lives, only men are permitted to perform the actual slaughter. Hence, not just incongruous, the sacrifice was also a restricted performance, one that left marginalized women attendants powerless to mount a contradictory, counter-framing response. Indeed, many of the non-union women I spoke to only produced their interpretation of the sacrifice to me in secret, one woman spoke to me in a ladies' bathroom, others asked me to turn the recorder off. Their secrecy was not surprising. By invoking the sacred, airline men not only enacted performative privilege, they also activated a set of taboos restricting response. In this particular case, heresy is is criminalized as blasphemy so that religious action can only be questioned in particular ways, by particular actors, in particular settings. Thus, for instance, when a politician argued on Nasim Zehra's TV show, that questioning the sacrifice was tantamount to ridiculing religion, she quickly backed down, telling viewers that "now that he has said what he has said, we can say nothing further on this issue." Indeed, many of the most prominent critics of the sacrifice, primarily men, comprised public figures already cast in the role of a reactionary elite. Their "liberal," "secular," interpretations, construed as another episode in the ongoing drama between two familiar factions, therefore, not only enhanced the resonance of the sacrifice, but also helped channel discussion away from questions of plane safety and airline responsibility, and onto a more familiar track: with liberals and traditionalists arguing over the appropriate place of religion in public life.

Mismatch therefore shored up performative success in two ways. First, as a puzzling performance requiring cognitive work to unpack, it not only broke past the noise of a crowded public sphere, but also achieved resonance with both, rivals and devotees. The interpretations and counter-interpretations produced by each of these two groups ricocheted off each other to generate a contained interpretive circuit, one restricting discussion to cover various aspects of the performance, rather than the situation (i.e. the initial crash) that generated it in the first place. Thus, incongruent performance worked as a powerful frame, redirecting discourse down a bland and innocuous track, one that was less threatening to stakeholders within the aviation context. Second, as a ritual performance, the sacrifice worked as an apparatus of separation, one that employed ritual not in its alchemical mode, to move runways and airplanes onto sacred space, but instead in its relational one. By citing traditional forms of authority and

association, the sacrifice and the image that went viral with it, didn't just frame discussion surrounding planes, crashes, safety and responsibility, it leveraged existing social divisions in the public sphere, to silence alternate potential interpretive performances that might disrupt its disruptive frame.

Strategic Performance:

This chapter focused on an instance of mismatch observed during fieldwork to develop the conceptual category of *incongruent performance*. Unlike congruent performances, which seek to accomplish authenticity, legitimacy, and verisimilitude by seamlessly bringing various elements of performance into alignment, incongruent performances succeed by deploying disruption to achieve resonance instead. Resonant media objects are not only obtrusive and attention grabbing, helping messages break through the noise of a saturated public sphere, but as framing devices, such objects are also more efficacious at redirecting media discourse in the context of crises. Thus, in the case of goat sacrifice on the runway, incongruent performance allowed hierarchically advantaged actors to seize the narrative in the wake of a crisis, and redirect discussion in favor of existing associations and alliances.

This chapter is by no means the first to suggest that disruptive performances impact the flow of action with important implications for the social order. Gender scholars have long suggested that performative mismatch may be an important vehicle of change for marginalized actors. Yet, these investigations have been less focused on political performance aimed at shaking or remaking public discussion in the context of crises. Further studies should examine when, how, and to what extent disadvantaged actors (raced, classed, gendered etc.) are able to deploy incongruent performance as a framing device during crisis situations, to disrupt dominant narratives by re-routing discussion through updated or transformed relational frames.

Admittedly, the theorization presented in this chapter is limited by the specialized nature of the action it focalizes. Goat sacrifice, as a religiously oriented, ritual performance is a very particular category of action and the insights it offers may therefore be similarly limited in scope. Yet, secular performances, especially political ones, must also draw upon background representations considered sacred, if they are to achieve success with framing in the context of crises. Indeed, not only religions but also various other hallowed institutions, such as the state, military, marriage, continue to provide modern societies and nations with the stock of rituals and ceremonies needed to invigorate the various signs and symbols that shore up their shared sacred background representations. Further studies should explore how various

dimensions of social difference (race, class, gender, sexuality etc.) temper an actor's ability to access the sacred as a resource for political performance in secular contexts. Can women candidates for office, for instance, deploy the symbols and rituals that cite the sacred, to tune out problematic narratives in the context of crises? Do incongruent performances reaffirm social relations also, when deployed by actors symbolically marked as different?

Finally, by focusing on a case of incongruent performance, this chapter has stressed a novel dimension of performative action, emphasizing what performance does as a kind of action in the political arena. That is, it has highlighted a strategic dimension of performance, conceptualizing it not only as a vehicle of credibility, aimed at connecting with audiences, but also as a strategically deployed framing device mean to manage meaning in the aftermath of crisis. Secondly, drawing on its roots in ritual, this paper has emphasized performance as not only an apparatus for generating solidarity via effervescence, but also an instrument of social division, one that not only orders people into categories but also reaffirms that ordering through the reinvigorating power of ritual. Third, by attending to the interpretive circuit generated in the interplay between supporters and opponents, I have suggested that performance may at times be aimed not at achieving connection but at containment via disruption. Further studies should investigate if these propositions bear scrutiny in other contexts, different from the Pakistani one examined here.

CHAPTER 5:

Gendered Authority Threats and Women's enactment of Spectacular, Discretionary and Critical Agency

On one sultry overcast morning, I went to the Women's *thana* for a scheduled interview with Sheila but she wasn't there. None of the usual gang was there. Hina, the radio operator was holding down the fort, along with the nightshift-woman everyone called Aunty, because she was "too old for regular duty." The morning shift posse arrived a little after noon. Sheila, large and cheerful led them in. For once she was in uniform. Twirling a rose wrapped in a cellophane cone, she was singing cheerfully, "*aaj mausam bara beiman hai,"* (today the weather is truly insincere). The weather was overcast and looked like rain. Since Karachi rarely sees rainfall, such weather tends to cheer people up and Sheila looked to be in a festive mood. All the ladies were in uniform, and wearing a great deal more make up than usual were smiling and singing along with Sheila. Each of them with a cellophane wrapped rose in her hand. "We have been on TV!" Sheila told me gleefully. The women crowded around the tiny hall that served as their waiting room. A few had their cell phones out; others were peering into their screens at text messages that colleagues at other stations were sending them. "When will we get to see the show?" a tall veiled woman asked? "It was live!" Sheila replied. The tall woman looked disappointed, "you mean we won't get to see it?" Sheila ignored her and turned to me, saying again, "Did you hear? We were on TV!" she said. "The host was amazed with us," Sheila went on, "he couldn't believe how educated our (police) people are," she said, "can you believe one of us has an MBA?" she asked me. "The host was very impressed with us."

Over the next few days Sheila kept asking me over and over again if I had watched the show yet, it should be available to view online, she said. Finally, after a few more days of her insisting, I looked for the show and watched it. It was 75 minutes long and quite boring, packed full of platitudes about the connections between poverty, unemployment and crime and clichés about the police laying down their lives to defend society. Three senior level police officers, two men and one woman, sat on stage with the show's host, while a large group of uniformed policemen and women made up the studio audience. Sheila, seated amongst these spectators, was handed the microphone for just under two minutes to answer a question about the family pressures women police face in taking on this challenging work. The host kept interrupting her as she spoke, teasing her with questions about her domestic affairs. He asked her if her husband, a civilian, ever complained that her job had made her too bossy at home. She replied that since her husband also worked long hours, their time at home rarely overlapped and so they didn't often get a chance to talk. The host pressed the point however, "but if you happen to put too much salt in the food," he asked, "Does your husband scold you?" Sheila's responses were lost in the laughter that ensued, the two policemen seated on stage interjected humorous remarks into the host's speech: wives are bossy even when they're not in the force, one said. The other joked that Sheila's husband probably stayed out late on purpose to avoid interfacing with his wife.

This all too brief and slighting treatment combined with Sheila's excitement and her insistence that I watch the show suggest both women's keenness for political participation as well as the challenges they face in occupying their public roles. Indeed, Sheila like many of the other women in my field-sites saw such opportunities for visibility as marks of a signal honor. Access to public platforms and roles was for these women an important indicator of distinction, a sign of their having arrived and of having achieved authority through conspicuousness. In short, women understood public appearance and visibility, whether on television or at a traffic light, as signs of their access to political clout.

Yet as Sheila's two-minute interview shows, in occupying public positions of authority working-class women agents of the state must confront the gender and class barriers that undermine their assumption of authoritative public roles. The difficulty they face in vaulting past class and gender stereotypes is suggested by the host's questions and comments. He did not ask any of the policemen if their wives considered them too bossy as a consequence of their jobs. Nor would it be thinkable for him to ask an elite class woman, such as those who populate seats in the legislative assembly, how their families would react if there were too much salt in the food. Lost in the short but disorderly exchange between host and policewoman were

Sheila's working-class lament about a lack of personal, intimate time for conversation between her husband and herself. Her quest and that of her husband for class mobility were obscured in the general laughter and clichéd banalities about over-salted food and terrified husbands.

As I came to know from my interview with her, Sheila is married to a much younger man, a country cousin, some 14 years her junior, whose father picked Sheila for his son not only because she was possessed with a secure government job but also as he hoped that she would be able to help and guide her husband to adjust to life in the big city. Sheila said that the early years of her marriage were taken up with helping her bewildered and disoriented husband learn how to navigate Karachi's roads. Subsequently she said, she had helped him find a job as a shop assistant in a fabric shop but despite the supplementary income this job brought into the household, the couple had recently had to move from the comparatively "posh" neighborhood where they had lived for a while, to a run-down slum. Moreover, Sheila said that mild mannered and gentle, her husband frequently chose to do the cooking at home, although he left the cleaning mostly to Sheila.

But none of these complicated gender and class dynamics came to light in the TV interview. Instead, the host chose to reduce Sheila to the gendered stereotypes that affix women in domestic roles, in spite of the fact that the reason he had invited her on the show that day was in connection with her public role. By entering a male occupation, he appeared to imagine, Sheila had emasculated her husband. Thus, in the short exchange Sheila came across as neither a competent woman nor a capable police officer. And yet, despite this unflattering representation the two minutes of fame were precious to Sheila.

The episode illustrates not only women's desire for visibility but also underscores how limited are the range of performances available to them in navigating public roles. Even when the actual arrangements of their lives violate social norms surrounding gender, women are unable to mobilize these transgressions to undermine stereotypes in their public appearances. Nor are they able to jettison these questions altogether. Their official status, underscored in Sheila's mediated moment by her uniform, can't protect them from having to acknowledge and address the social characteristics that complicate their definition through performance of their official public roles. In other words, as gendered and classed actors' women occupying official roles in public interactions must contend with a range of what I call **gendered authority threats**.

I conceptualize gendered authority threats as disruptive events occurring within what Goffman (1983) calls the "interactive order" of public space. Rather than treating individuals and social structures as

discreet and competing entities that come together to make up interactive encounters, such as the one that occurred between the TV host and Sheila, this line of work suggests that actors and social structures "are the joint products of an interaction order sui generis" (Rawls, 1987) that is constitutive of both, actors and social structures. For Goffman (and sociologists that follow him) such public interactions are founded on performances, which are shaped by both environments and audiences. Part of the purpose of performance is to define the meaning of a situation for observers. An actor therefore is defined not just by her putative role within a particular organizational context but also by her ability to successfully communicate this role to her interlocutors within an interactive situation. This communicative task can be complicated, as we see in the case of Sheila's TV interview, when interlocutors reject or refuse, via jokes, antagonism, or humiliation etc. "the front" an actor is effecting within an interactive encounter. In other words, such moments of mismatch between presentation and recognition elucidate the interactive order as ground zero for the production and perpetuation of gendered inequalities in the public sphere.

In thinking of the interactive order as an epicenter of gendered inequalities in this way, I build on insights from feminist theory, which conceives of gender as a structure (Risman 2004) produced via performances (Butler 1994) that are hemmed in by various mechanisms of accountability (West and Zimmerman 1987) including retribution (Faludi 1991, also see Pascoe 2007, Rudman and Phelan 2008). While reprisals for stepping out of normative gender lines are generally studied under the broad banner of "backlash," scholars have argued the concept has become diluted from overuse. Indeed, the term "backlash" has been used to describe sudden shifts in public opinion following policy change but also to describe individual and social reactions ranging from arson and murder to silent disapproval or civil noncompliance. Covering too many distinct varieties of resistance to women's economic and political participation--- collective, entrenched ones as well as unpremeditated individual ones--- the notion of backlash is therefore criticized for a lack of conceptual clarity (Hayes, Incantalupo, and Smith 2016). Responding to the recent call for more precise terminology (Walsh et. al. 2017), the concept of gendered authority threats, developed in this chapter, elucidates a particular form of backlash, one that unfolds within the interactive order, where various forms of misrecognition pose an ongoing obstacle to women's public authority. By working to discredit an actor's definition through performance of the meaning of a particular social situation, such moments of misrecognition as harassment, heckling, ogling, but also joking and sarcasm can undermine the legitimacy of an actor's presentation through performance of her official status and authority. By emphasizing the particularistic aspects of a public actor's social identity,

challengers, such as the TV host, cast the "front" she erects as part of her performance into doubt, threatening to strip her of her social standing and to void her authority. Gendered authority threats, in short, constitute a refusal of recognition, a refusal that can run the gamut of repudiating responses to women's authority, from civil noncompliance, to humor, aggression and sexual harassment- each threatening to upend women's authority within a public situation.

How do women manage gendered authority threats? How do they overcome the gender and class stereotypes that serve as barriers to their assumption of authoritative roles in public space? And what can their responses tell us about agency and gender in the context of the interactive order?

In what follows, I examine the specific ways women in each of my field sites managed gendered threats to their authority posed by members of the public in the course of the women's official work. In each of these field sites, women deployed a different kind of agency in response to gendered authority threats. Airline women addressed these challenges by enacting what I call **spectacular agency**, a mode of agency that visibilizes and calls attention to a threat in order to discipline and discredit challengers through the use of spectacle. Policewomen in contrast responded to gendered authority threats by deploying, what I refer to as **discretionary agency,** an agentic mode particular to the police, that involves overrunning legal codes to address challenges to their authority. Policewomen were able to call upon this kind of capacity by redefining the meaning of the threats they faced, framing them in ways that rallied male colleagues to take their part. Finally, lady health workers responded to gendered authority threats with **critical agency,** a critical agentic mode that uses threats as opportune moments for highlighting shortcomings in an organization's structure and to raise attention to women's problematic status and vulnerabilities within it. In each site, women's efforts suggest ways that threats can provide opportunities for the activation of different kinds of agency. In each case, women's efforts also underscore the embedded character of agency, which shaped by broader work contexts affords women with different symbolic and relational capacities for managing the gendered authority threats they encounter in the execution of their official duties.

Spectacular Agency:

I had been talking to Sabeeha, a 26-year-old flight attendant about stigma when she brought up harassment. Originally from a small in-land Pakistani city, Sabeeha joined the airline 5 years ago after

completing a two-year degree in business. Her credentials set her apart from her colleagues, most of whom were inducted into PIA directly after completing a local degree referred to as "intermediate" (school finishing certificates). Alongside her PIA job, Sabeeha was enrolled part time in an MBA program and said she planned eventually to quit flying and set up her own business as an entrepreneur. This ambition also set her apart from other flight attendants; many of who were working to support widowed mothers and fatherless siblings and had no such exit strategy in mind. Unlike these other women, working due to financial need, Sabeeha said she had taken on PIA work as a lark (*shugal*), "just for fun," and to "see the world." Moreover, unlike other women, Sabeeha said her family had no problem with her job, "in fact they marvel at it," she said, "my friends, family, my teachers, everyone, they are impressed that I have travelled so many places." I asked her if that meant she had altogether escaped the stigma that other women mentioned facing as a consequence of their work with the airline. "No, I have faced it in many places" she said, explaining that since many of PIA's passengers were "labourers" from rural backgrounds where women were restricted in their access to public spaces, they were prone to "eye every woman in an odd way." And this sensitivity to women in public space was complicated even more in the case of women performing a public role. "But when we put on a uniform, then we are looked at in another (worse) way altogether," she said, "and those who are airhostesses, they have a bad image."

But Sabeeha was quick to dismiss this image problem as not that big a deal. "Thankfully, during flights," she said, "we are provided with so much security that if anyone tries to even touch us, we can have him arrested, once we get on the ground." I asked her if there were special laws in place that enabled such a move and she said, "it has happened, on one of my own flights, we called the UK police out." I asked her what the passenger had done to warrant such an action and she said, "the guy had used abusive language, had tried to hit her, he tried to push her like this (she mimes pushing)." According to Sabeeha, the UK police gave the women two options, "the UK police also decided to take a diplomatic stance," she says "so they gave us two options, we had all been ladies on the flight (i.e. the airline attendants). (The police said), 'you can either have this man properly arrested, but then you will have to make circuits of the courts, in the UK, all of you.' Meaning, all of us would have to go to the courts over and over again (i.e. as witnesses)." If the women were willing to take this option, Sabeeha explains, then the UK police were willing to follow all their procedures and lock the man up, "they have very strict procedures," she remarked. The second option the UK police gave the women, Sabeeha said, was that "the guy will ask you for forgiveness, and you forgive him, and we will give him a warning, that if he does something like this

again, he will not be permitted to travel on your airline again."

According to Sabeeha, the women discussed both these options amongst themselves and decided "that the second option is a better one, otherwise, they (the police) were trapping us in a way," she says, "(telling us) that you will have to give evidence, give testimony etc. so we said, 'second option is best.'" I asked her if she thought the second option had been effective? And she said that it had, "He got scared, and later we came to hear, when next time I flew to the UK, my station manager told me that the police are still after him, the guy has not been able to relax," she said, because "they keep questioning him from time to time, the UK ones, so he is fearful, scared, and he does think to himself, 'why did I do that?'"

Sabeeha's account underscores an important dimension of gendered authority threats; they often operate in a clandestine or innocuous mode. While jokes, such as the ones the TV show host made when talking to Sheila can be hard to address if humor is dismissed as harmless, more serious threats, such as harassment, gain power from their invisibility, since those victimized may be fearful of the stigma and shame that can accompany reporting. As Mansbridge and Shames (2008) note, it is precisely the relative invisibility of certain forms of backlash that pose challenges for women confronting such situations. So long as gendered authority threats are obscured or dismissed by cultural mechanisms of honor and shame, women are unable to raise attention to the problems they face and are unable to rally public support for redressing their grievances.

Sabeeha and her colleagues got around these challenges by banding together to call out the harasser, even going so far as to marshal a foreign police force in an unfamiliar national context to aid and support them. By calling attention to the threat they faced, these women deployed what I call **spectacular agency**, a mode of agency that visibilizes these abuses in order to rally bystander support and humiliate or discredit challengers. Spectacular agency allows airline women not only to visibilize the threat but also to demonstrate to the challenger, and to those observing the drama, their own willingness to transgress cultural codes that usually prevent women in the Pakistani context (and elsewhere, see Chubin 2014, Street and Stafford 2004) from making such private abuses public.

Other airline women narrated a similar kind of agency. When I asked Shazia, an airline attendant in her mid 20s, for instance, how she managed unwanted flirtations on board, she said, "Make a noise, raise a ruckus" doing so, she argued, not only alerted other passengers to the problematic situation but also caused the man in question to feel humiliated, "then he doesn't have the courage to do it again," she said. Similarly, Seema argued, "giving a shut up call," to an offending passenger gave other problematic

passengers also to know, “be careful how you speak to her, she’s one to deliver a slap to the face.” Such call-out gestures, Roshan argued, were vital to the overall image of airline women, “where did the negative image of airhostesses come from?” she asked me rhetorically, “we ourselves made it,” she said, arguing that the frequent association of airline women in the media with activities such as shoplifting and smuggling had given the profession a bad name, but this negative image can be repaired, she said, in one on one interactions, “when I meet people face to face,” she argued, “they come to know what I am really like, then the image in their minds, gradually starts to change.” Thus, airline women see the interactive situation as a key arena of intervention, one that can not only foster a more respectable image for women, but also, by drawing attention to their abuse at the hands of some passengers, allows women to rally dormant allies, such as other passengers, colleagues, or the police to come to their aid.

In addition to visibilizing threats, marshalling bystander support and warning off other potential harassers, spectacular agency also enables airline women to activate affective registers of humiliation and shame for their own ends. Such moral emotions, scholars have argued, tie actors to the interactive order, where the need for self-protection obligates actors to accept another’s presentation at face value and also to represent one’s own face accurately (Goffman 1959, also see Collins 1988, Colomy and Brown 1998). Actors caught presenting false faces are subject to humiliation and punishment. Just as gendered authority threats can work to undermine the front gendered actors present in their performances, spectacular agency can undermine the credibility of those challenging women’s authority. By revealing and visibilizing an offending actor’s clandestine gestures, spectacular agents can strip such challengers of their social standing. By calling upon the police and extorting an apology from the offending passenger, women subjected him to humiliation through public spectacle, in a ritual “unmasking” or debunking of his public face. Thus, spectacular agency provides women with a strategy for managing gendered authority threats at symbolic, affective and relational levels.

Discretionary Agency:

Despite access to police uniforms, badges and insignia that clearly signal their rank and authority to the general public, policewomen are not immune to gendered authority threats. Huda, a mid-ranking police officer, for instance, recounted the following experience of harassment at the hands of a citizen. She said that when she first began working in the police force, she was on her way to the station in uniform one day when she noticed a rickshaw driver ogling her. “One is used to men ogling,” she says, “but he was just

not stopping." After a while, she says, she noticed that he was making obscene gestures "he was doing something, there," she says, indicating the pelvic region. "I just couldn't take it anymore so I went and picked up two men from the station and grabbed the driver, "'*arre bharway*" (You pimp) and I beat him and beat him and I punched him and punched him and then we took him to the station, where I beat him some more." At the station, she said, her male colleagues asked her, "what happened madam?" and she replied, "This man was harassing your madam." Incredulously, she comments, "I am in uniform and this is how he is behaving!" I ask her what happened next and she says, "Then we confiscated his rickshaw, I said, 'I can be complainant; we can file a case,'" she says, "So we kept him all day in the lock up. In the evening, his family came and begged us to release him and I told them what he had done. He was crying and saying, 'you are my sister,' and I said, 'Really? Do you make such gestures in front of your sisters, do they too have to see you making these kinds of motions?' She said the man's family "was also flashing curses at him (i.e. holding their palm up in front of him, a gesture implying, curse you). And he cried some more and I said, 'why are you crying,' and he said, 'because a woman has beaten me.'" Huda says, she replied, "I'm not a woman, I am a police!"

Huda did not press charges against the rickshaw driver and released him from the lock up that evening. She said she felt that the humiliation the man faced in getting a beating from a woman in sight of his family was sufficient as a warning and a punishment.

Huda's account bears a number of similarities to Sabeeha's. In describing their successful management of gendered authority threats, both women enact a performative mode of redress against their challengers. In both cases, the women called upon the spectacular apparatus of state by bringing the culprit in confrontation with the police, yet neither was interested in taking the case further by formally pressing charges or pursuing justice through the courts. Unlike Sabeeha, however, Huda as a police officer was able to lay claim to a repertory of supplementary resources unavailable to airline women, cussing, beating, confinement and confiscation of his possessions. She was able to do so because the allies she called upon to aid her, did not like Sabeeha's UK police adopt a diplomatic or impartial stance but instead, saw the threat as a challenge also to their own authority. Although at the time of the incident Huda was still a junior officer stationed at a male police station, she said her male colleagues had, like her, been enraged at the man's disrespect for Huda's uniform and therefore keenly assisted her in punishing him. Discretionary agency turned therefore on the common meaning men and women police attach to their uniform.

Both men and women police, including those at the lowly rank of constable, would describe their uniforms to me as a "lion skin." Laila, a 25-year-old constable for instance had joined the force in emulation of her father, who had served the police for forty years. In the beginning, she said, she had not felt very enthusiastic about her new job, "I was not that excited to join (the police), I already knew what to expect, for me it was just a normal job, not something special," she says, "but then my father said to me that 'an ordinary person thinks like an ordinary person, but when you put a uniform on your body, it is a lion skin, your thinking changes, you get a power inside you." She said that she had come to agree with her father's belief that the uniform possessed magical transformative qualities, "Right now," she explained, "I am speaking to you normally because I am in civilian clothes but when I put on my uniform then it will be something else, it feels different, you feel changed. This is the truth." I asked her in what way it felt different and she explained, "When my father used to come home in his uniform it felt like 10 people have entered the house and when he took the uniform off, then everything became relaxed, he felt like himself again," she says, laughing.

Like Laila, many of the women I spoke to take tremendous pride in their uniforms, saying that putting these on made them feel transformed and empowered. For instance, when I asked Hina, a constable, to tell me about a time when she had felt pride through her job, she said, "when I first put on my uniform," she added that when she had first received her uniform, she had worn it to visit her father's grave, "he would have been proud," she said, "he was a bus driver, and as such he was a person who had to follow police commands. I wish he could have known that today his daughter is the one who gives the commands."

Women's claim that their uniform is a lion skin, a talisman that ensures obedience and an emblem of their connection with the state, goes hand in hand with the discretionary authority Huda was able to exercise against her challenger. When she told me this story, what struck me was the pride Huda evinced in her exercise of violence and verbal abuse, she appeared unconscious that she was describing a scenario redolent of police excess, of their propensity to overrun the legal authority vested in the force by the state. Indeed, violence and humiliation were so endemic to their jobs that the police rarely exhibited any self-consciousness in recounting incidents exemplifying legal excess. Instead they appeared to consider these accounts as evidence of their competence and efficiency. In her study of police violence in India, Rachel Wahl (2014) notes that far from feeling shame for their violation of human rights principles, police officers see violence as a necessary part of their jobs. Similarly, my research participants produced descriptions of

violence as proof of their commitment to social justice. Indeed, since my research participants knew I was interested in the gender dynamics of policing, they would point out to me the ways that gender arrangements were upended through their use of such tactics. Like Huda, other policewomen also boasted about the police use of violence to upend socially established gender dynamics. In particular, they narrated cross gender, woman to man violence as important signs of their capacity to transcend social equations of gender.

For instance, various women at one women's station independently recounted to me an incident of violent reprisal that they saw as examples of their ease in remaking gender norms. In each case, I had asked women to tell me about a situation when they had come to the aid of a woman citizen. Three different women, separately brought up a particular case of domestic abuse handled by their station. A woman came to the station, one day, I was told, her clothes drenched and smelling foul, she complained that not satisfied with just beating and cussing at her, her husband had urinated on her. The policewomen said her story made them feel enraged. Immediately, they said, their station-head had sent out a police van full of men and women to go pick up the offending husband. He was brought to the station and kept there all day; the women said they took turns to beat him. Hina explained, "We, not the men, beat him ourselves." Yet in this case too, the police were satisfied with personally dispensing justice through violence instead of bringing charges against the man. When I asked what the outcome of the case had been, policewomen said that they got the man to beg on his hands and knees for forgiveness and to apologize to his wife in writing so that she would have verifiable evidence of his abuse for possible future use. I asked the policewomen how they could be sure the wife would be safe from reprisals once the couple got back home. The policewomen were sanguine in their belief that the man had been sufficiently terrified and would never step out of line again. In any case, they told me, it was no part of their job to promote divorce and separation, instead in cases of domestic violence they worked hard to broker peace and compromise, discouraging women from filing charges, which would only create fissures in their marriage and leave them without economic or social security, but also shaming and terrorizing men into behaving more decently at home.

Not just cases of domestic violence, which is the province primarily of women's police stations, but non-gendered mainstream cases brought to the men's stations also, were at times handled via the humiliating effects of cross gender violence. Razia, for instance, recounted an episode she felt truly highlighted the respect she received when working amongst men police, "They used to have men also

beaten at my hands," she told me, pausing for several minutes for dramatic effect, "they screamed," she went on, "the ASP (assistant superintendent police) said to me, 'Razia Khan, today I want to see how many *galiyan* (curse words) do you know? How much can you *kutt* (pummel) him (the accused)?'" she says, "I gave him two *chittars* (lashes with a strap) and he fell to the ground squealing, 'I'll tell all, I'll tell all.'"

On the one hand, these accounts of cross-gendered violence represent the state's use of gender to discipline and subordinate citizens. By dispensing violence via women agents to male citizens, the police symbolically emasculate their male subjects, constructing them as feminine in relation to the state as represented by the police. On the other hand, doing gender in this complicated way is also productive of women's subjectivities and their sense of agency within the police. When they are instrumentalized in this way, women come to see themselves as occupying a new position vis-à-vis the gendered state. Access to the state's violent resources provides women also with access to a form of authority particular to the police.

Sociologists and other scholars have noted that since in practice the police rarely remain within the bounds of legality, their operations especially their exercise of violence, reveal the limits of state capacity, "The law of the police marks the point at which the state can no longer guarantee through the legal system the empirical ends that it desires at any price to attain" (Walter Benjamin 1978). In other words, the police through a propensity to intervene in situations of ambiguous legality, wind up erasing the line between preserving and making the law. And it is precisely this extra-legal discretionary authority that empowers policewomen with a unique capacity for managing gendered authority threats from the public. A particularly compelling instance of this discretionary agency is provided by Constable Shahbano's account.

Shahbano had been a constable for 15 years when I met her at the police academy where she was undergoing training for promotion to the rank of Head Constable. Shahbano had grown up in Karachi, she said, but as a child she frequently went with her father to visit her ancestral village in the north of the province. These visits occasioned a great deal of anger, she said,

> My village runs according to the *wadera-shahi* system (feudal land-lordship system), so ladies are considered absolutely nothing. So, when we went to the village, we were told, do *purdah,* (avoid the male gaze). So, when we were in Karachi, we (she and her sisters) did as we wished, like we would wear a *dupatta* (a simple stole or wrap), no one said anything. But when we went to visit the village, our father would stop us at the bus stop, particularly, and tell us to put on a *burqa*, (a full body veil), he would say, your personal will comes to an end here, here it is our *biradari* system

> (fraternity, sort of like a tribe) that holds sway and you have to do *purdah* and follow tradition. So, this used to make me feel very irritated. And the way it was in the village, that gents would sit in front, ladies were sent to sit in the back, I used to feel that why don't they let us come forward? And they didn't have this feeling, like if we were sitting in the bus, that ladies have come, let us stand up and give them our seats, they would just keep on sitting. And as for jobs, we would see a doctor or two (that was a woman), otherwise they made ladies work in the fields. There was no such thing as a good post (i.e. job opportunity) for women. So, I used to say to myself, that I want to do some such job where I too can sit or stand in front of (confront) these *waderas* (local landlords) (as an equal) and I should show them, that if they have money, that's fine, whatever, if we don't have money, so we should stay forever in the background? We also have aspirations; our heart also wants that we also should sit and stand like you. Your ladies haven't descended from heaven, so this is why, I always wished I had the power, strength so that I could show them.

I asked her if her job had provided her with this desired capacity and she said with considerable pride that it had. "Yes, I got what I wanted." I asked her to give me an example and she recounted an episode involving the headman of her village, who was also an elected member of the local provincial assembly. One day the headman came to the Sindh (provincial) Assembly building where Shahbano was posted as sentry at the gate. "He didn't have a pass," she says, "no one was allowed to go in without a pass." Shahbano decided to use this opportunity to demonstrate her power and authority to her village headman, "I deliberately said to them (her male colleagues), that 'let him cool his heels for a while, he is from my village, and I want to teach him a lesson.'" She explains, "just like he would make people from my village wait when they came to speak to him, his sentries would say,' *sahib* (sir) is relaxing right now, or he is busy, or he has guests right now.' So I said, 'make him cool his heels, so that he also gets to realize what it is like to be made to wait.'" Her colleagues willingly acceded to her wishes; Shahbano said that since security is kept so tight at the assembly building it was not difficult to deny the headman entry since he had failed to bring along his pass. Shahbano then intervened in the situation she had engineered, "so then I said (to the men), 'ask him his caste,' then I said, 'tell him, that the madam who is from your tribe, she is saying, that on her behalf, you can be allowed to go through.'" This revelation astonished the headman. Shahbano said he couldn't believe it, "So he says, 'who is that? There is no lady in the police from our tribe, who is she that I don't know?'" At this point Shahbano revealed herself, "So then I told him, 'I am the daughter

of so and so,' and he said, 'really?'" This revelation flattened the former hierarchies that had offended Shahbano, she says, "Then, our village culture got tossed aside, he met me Karachi style, in a friendly way, no one would know (from looking at us) that he is the leader in our village and that I am a poor kind of person, forget about those distinctions, he was giving me his number, he was saying, 'daughter these men of mine will come, so do let them through too,' I said, 'no, I am not your servant, I am a servant of the *sarkar* (state)! And the same system that is in place for everyone, will apply also to you. It's just that I wanted to show you a *demo* (demonstration), of how things stand buddy." Proudly Shahbano told me, "now because of my job, I am out (of the clutches) of our tribal system.'"

Shahbano's experience with her village headman at the gates of an assembly building, illuminates the kind of discretionary agency police women are able to access in dealing with the public, that is unavailable to airline women or to health workers. By using official resources for personal ends, women police, unlike airline attendants come to see themselves as exceptional, and as uniquely wedded to the state. Seeing herself as a servant of the state, Shahbano is able to divorce herself from the localized hierarchies that could be instrumentalized by citizens to threaten Shahbano's authority. As an agent of the state, Shahbano is able to exercise discretionary agency to define her position vis-a-vis her village headman, not only revenging herself for past indignities but also casting herself as equal to him. Yet, her ability to do so relies on an informal authority to overlook the requirement of a pass for entry into the building, a discretionary authority acknowledged by the headman when he asks her for her number and requests she provides similar favoritism for his servants.

Critical Agency:

Unlike airline and policewomen, lady health workers are provided with fewer formal emblems of their connection with the state. While policewomen and airline attendants are possessed with uniforms and badges to reinforce their official positions, lady health workers are equipped with little more than a bag full of vitamins and contraceptives and official registers they've drawn out by hand. In the absence of more formal tokens of their official position, LHWs say they frequently have to confront various gendered authority threats in the routine performance of their jobs. Polio work in particular, appears to evoke considerable ire amongst the communities that LHWs serve. Women complain that in the course of this vaccination work they have been pelted "with shoes and stones." Reema recounted how as she got down to begin vaccination work in a far-flung neighborhood one time, "children came out of somewhere and

started throwing stones at us." In that moment, she says, "it felt like we are not even humans, like we have come from some other world," she laughs. "They threw stones at you?" I ask her incredulously and she replies "as soon as we got down a racket began, people were chanting 'Polio workers have come, Polio workers have come,' I don't know where this *lashkar* (troop) of children came out from, throwing stones at us" she says, "I felt scared that a stone might get me. One girl (i.e. Polio worker) passed out."

While some of this ire against lady health workers is inspired by their family planning work, which some see as antithetical to religious belief, Polio work incites even more anger against the women's presence in the field. A widespread belief that the Polio vaccine is circulated amongst Pakistanis as part of a western conspiracy to undermine the strength of Muslim populations, that the vaccine has the effect of sterilizing Muslim children, especially boys, causes people to embrace various tactics, including violence, to discourage lady health workers from venturing forth in their communities. To mitigate some of these threats, the state began in the last few years to provide workers with police escort. Lady health workers however are ambivalent about this provision. While some LHWs say the police provide a crucial kind of back up to Polio workers, others see the provision of police escort as a supplementary rather than substantive measure. This latter group argues that rather than elevate women's status or authority in the field, the police heighten women's vulnerabilities in a number of ways.

Rana 43 is one of those who say that police escort, especially by male officers is a positive provision, "we feel safe, (we feel) that someone is backing us up because when we are working in (the) Polio (drive) then we don't know who is behind us, who is looking, who is staring, who is doing what, we don't know what is going on behind us, anyone can come up and kill us but (now we know that) the police are standing at our backs, so we feel that someone is there." In addition to providing operational aid by acting as LHW's eyes and ears, women say the police are also an important sign of the security and therefore of the formality of Polio work. Meera for instance explained to me why she prefers male escort over that of women police, "amongst us maleness is a sign, (in our society)," she says, "the male is security, meaning, the word *mard* (man) is taken as better for security," in fact, she says, police presence in polio work has come to be taken so much for granted that "if any team goes to them (citizens) without the police then they (the public) will refuse to let us administer Polio drops to their children," because the team will appear less authentic. In a similar vein, Shazia says that the provision of police escort underlines the state's seriousness in eradicating Polio. Several high-level officials are involved in supporting polio rounds now, she says, naming various commissioner offices that participate, alongside the Inspector General of Police

to aid Polio work, "so most things are now handled at the SHO (station house officer) level," she says, meaning that not just rank and file, but officer rank police personnel assist polio workers. The involvement of high-ranking officials, for Shazia, is also a sign, one that communicates the increased formality of vaccination work, "It has become very tight now. Now, a refuser is picked up and taken out of the house (i.e. taken into custody), they take them out of their houses, refusing has been declared illegal."

But other women are more circumspect about the provision of police escort for several reasons. Some women complain that the police assigned to work with them can slow the work down, wanting to leave early or to break for lunch. For instance, I had been asking Farzana if Polio work was still seen as dangerous and she replied, "Of course, it is dangerous. (Do you know) how many workers of mine have been beaten? Therefore, the police are deployed, (to escort us) as well," she said, "but they do not do their jobs as well as required," she said, complaining that the police would hang far back from the workers, content to stand for instance at one end of a lane rather than trudge up to each house within it, "and sometimes," she went on, "they go off on break without giving us any warning," she said. "Then, around 12:00 or 1:00 pm, they start pestering us saying they need to leave. They start insisting they want to leave, even though our work is not yet completed," she complained, explaining that Polio work had to go on until every child on their schedule was vaccinated, even if that meant working till late in the evening.

Mehreen added to this list of complaints with a more serious allegation, "sometimes," she said, the police try to flirt with the workers. This "has happened several times," she says, complaining that this dynamic makes it harder to retain workers, "I have to persuade and convince my workers to keep going," she says, "when they complain to me I tell them not to talk to them (the policemen) unless it is absolutely necessary. I tell them to only concentrate on their work." I asked her what kinds of things workers complain about, she said, the workers complained that the police tried to talk to them about "Irrelevant, unnecessary and unreasonable things, such as, 'Give me your phone number,' 'Do you want to go (out) with me?' 'Come on, let's drink a cup of tea together,'" the workers see these kinds of advances very negatively.

These views of the police as excessively flirtatious go hand in hand with ideas that the police are corrupt and self-serving and therefore not fit to accompany lady health workers, who see themselves in contrast as morally driven actors. For instance, I was in conversation with a pair of health workers, Laila and Reema, when Reema said, "in fact the police, take care of their own needs by stopping and frisking," she was referring to the widespread practice of bribe generation where police are said to stop poorer

drivers travelling on motorcycles, buses, and commercial vehicles to demand bribes in exchange for passage. Laila agreed, "we do not do so," Reema continued, "we do not do so," adding, "you can consider us like a *fauji* (soldier), or like a President," she said, "when he takes oath (of office), that is the dedication with which we work."

These complaints highlight the challenges that problematic cultural images of particular state agents pose to their performances in the interactive order. LHWs express ambivalence about the state's provision of police escort, not only because negative stereotypes of the police undermine the credibility of LHWs moral performances but also because the women see the provision of police protection as mere eyewash with little impact on LHWs status and therefore their authority. Polio work, after all, is only one amongst a broad range of services LHWs provide to the public, and since formal protection is provided only for this one activity, LHWs see police escort as a supplementary rather than a substantive provision of authorizing resources. For instance, Salma complains that even though she serves her community on the behest of the state, she is provided with no formal recognition of her status as a cog in the overall health edifice,

> "There are a number of hospitals in my area but when we take someone to one of these, no one listens to us there. They treat us just the same as they would a normal person. We are given no reference slip, no special care is provided or acknowledgement given that we are authorized to refer patients there, instead, when any of our girls refer someone to a hospital, for any situation, be it gynae or TB or for family planning, they get no special attention or treatment, from the doctors."

Because of this lack of recognition, Salma says, lady health workers also lose status in the eyes of their clients, "so then what the client says to us is, 'what is the point of you people?'" Thus, in their view, gendered authority threats against LHWs stem from their lowly status within the state. If only the state were to provide LHWs with a higher official rank[11] and better official scaffoldings of authority, such as service books, office space, transport and fuel allowances, LHWs claim, to enhance their status in the eyes of the public, LHWs performances of authority would accordingly become more believable.

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[11] Status in state jobs is partly measured via what is referred to as grade, this is a number the state assigns to distinguish officials ranks across departments e.g. police heads of a station house are usually grade 14 officers, doctors are grade 17 and above).

But when LHWs have agitated for these reforms to their official positions, their bosses have gone so far as to deploy the police to act against the health workers.

Hajra recounts the state's response to LHW agitations for better status,

> We sat in *dharna* (sit-in) we did walks, there isn't any place we haven't seen. We have gone everywhere, even to the Supreme Court in Islamabad, to Assembly and Senate buildings, everywhere... Imagine, if you have not eaten anything, and storms are raging, there is thick darkness around you, women police, gents police, are surrounding you and there are a lot of people from the government and tear gas and these big, big-- water is thrown at you with pressure, (i.e. water canons) all these things are there, and when it feels like even God has abandoned you, and you are panting and sighing, and all of us females, are sitting in the middle of the road, poor things, for so many hours, sitting .... We have even thrashed the police, gents' police and lady police. When they struck us, we also didn't stop our hands, then we would give them a good beating.

In a similar vein, Laila recalls the protests she participated in,

> "We ate (experienced) jail, batons, torture, stones, teargas, going blind, falling upon bars, we saw such things and yet the next month again we were ready for *dharna* (sit in). Hot water on us, we were near the Chief Minister's house, hot water was thrown on us, I broke my elbow," (pointing to her left elbow), this one, I was shielding one of my girls, I got hit with a baton from a lady police, they (the police) pulled my hair and dragged me so hard, my shoes broke, when she released my hair, there was a handful left in her hand. All kind of violence and brutality, we faced, they did everything, they (government officials) did nothing.

In view of women's efforts to acquire better, more substantive official scaffolds of status and authority therefore, the assignment of police escort, in their view, is a paltry, and primarily cosmetic provision. Indeed, women argue that the police can at times create even bigger problems for them in their

community. For instance, Shireen recounts the following episode in connection with her police escort.

> "One day, while I was working on the street, a little girl began pelting stones at us. In response, the policemen with me, fired several rounds of bullets in the air, as warning, despite the fact that I had forbidden them from doing such a thing, I had said that 'you all will leave once we're done here, but I live here, and will have to remain in this dangerous neighborhood after you are gone. And if people get angry because of your police action, they may come to harm me or my daughters. When the police fired, I ran back towards them to stop them. I immediately grabbed the two policemen and entered a nearby house. After a short while, 30-35[12] men came out with weapons and started knocking on doors in search of the police. In the meantime, I was desperately calling the area-in-charge and the zonal officers (on my phone), but nobody responded. I remained hidden in someone's house, I kept the police with me, also hidden. Then, I called the senior police officer and he came down and the Rangers (a paramilitary force) arrived a little later too, and then we were rescued.

But while this incident ended safely for the police, Shireen says, "but I live in that neighborhood," and following this incident, she says, some of the men "began sitting with their weapons," in the lane near her house, they sat there, "for four days. I had to hide in my house for one year and I would not go out even to buy vegetables. Subsequently, Shireen said she left off doing polio work, even though the money she had earned from Polio work had helped Shireen meet vital expenses, she decided the risk far outweighed the financial benefit.

As these various narratives of managing threats show, LHWs are provided with very different resources for addressing gendered authority threats than policewomen or airline attendants. Unable to enact discretionary agency and wary of spectacular modes of agency in addressing such threats, LHWs

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[12] Here she referred to a particular ethnic group described seen by LHWs and police as especially unruly and dangerous. I have deliberately removed this ethnic identification in various parts of my writing because I fear that this invocation of ethnicity may be part of an ongoing effort to racialize this group for political purposes. I should mention that the ethnicity in question is part of my heritage. This identity however, is not immediately identifiable as my appearance and accent are ambiguous as to ethnicity.

enact what I call critical agency; an agency focused on evaluating and addressing the state's classed and gendered arrangements rather than deploying its cosmetic provisions. Instead of a resource for managing authority challenges, LHWs see the state as complicit in their vulnerabilities to such threats. According to them, it is the state's obduracy in refusing to provide LHWs with official recognition of their affiliation with the state that heightens LHW's insecurity and vulnerability. Thus, for LHW's gendered authority threats are opportune moments for highlighting the injustice of their ongoing marginalization by the state. Paid far less than airline women and the police, and provided with fewer resources than these better-equipped women, LHWs cannot be content with merely performative measures. From their perspective, it is the status of workers that needs state attention, not superficial aspects of their work conditions. By deploying critical agency LHWs transform threats into opportunities for critiquing existing arrangements– to raise attention to their own problematic status and vulnerabilities within the state.

In this chapter I have developed the concept of gendered authority threats to provide a more precise conceptual vocabulary for understanding instances of backlash, or resistance to women's participation in public or civic life. While the term backlash has become diluted through its use to describe too many different varieties of resistance to women's economic and political participation, the term gendered authority threats focuses on the interactive challenges women face when they try to perform authoritative roles in public spaces. Gendered authority threats, as I develop the term in this chapter, refers to disruptive events occurring within the interactive order. By working to discredit an actor's definition through performance of the meaning of a particular situation these disruptive events and gestures threaten to strip agents of their social standing. Thus harassment, heckling, ogling, but also joking and sarcasm can undermine the legitimacy of an actor's official performance. In other words, gendered authority threats are a refusal of recognition. By emphasizing the femaleness of an incumbent challengers cast women authority figures as mismatched within a context. Their front is cast into doubt.

As I show in this chapter, such threats can also serve as opportunities. Women can address threats by activating spectacular agency, visibilizing the threat to rally bystanders and other dormant allies to come to their aid. By revealing an offending actor's clandestine gestures, moreover, spectacular agents can reverse the affective registers of a threatening incident. By subjecting a challenger to humiliation through public spectacle in a ritual "unmasking" or debunking of his public face, women can lob back at the him whatever effects of shame/dishonor his actions may have generated for them. Thus, spectacular agency provides women with a strategy for managing gendered authority threats at symbolic, affective and

relational levels.

In certain unique cases like that of the police, women can draw on even more of the state's resources to address gendered authority threats. By defining such threats as attacks against the state's key institution, women can draw upon discretionary authority to activate discretionary agency, a mode of redress that exceeds legal limit to discipline and punish offenders. In police women's view, these resources help unsettle gendered equations, providing women with opportunities to flatten some of the hierarchies that would have trapped them if they had no recourse to state power through their jobs.

Finally, gendered authority threats also provide agents with opportunities to critique existing arrangements, as disruptions in the interaction order, such events can afford women the opportunity to raise attention to their own problematic status and vulnerabilities within an organization.

By highlighting the various threats women are forced to confront in occupying public positions, this chapter raises important policy considerations. It suggests that it's not enough for organizations, such as those connected with the state, to pursue gender mainstreaming via quotas or recruitment drives, gender mainstreaming policies ought also to include provision for managing gendered authority threats. This could include providing women with tools, via training, as well as through policy and law, for taking action against such threats when they occur. To be clear, Pakistan has passed anti-harassment laws that protect women against exploitation at work and in the home. But in each case I describe in this chapter, women relied on their own ingenuity to manage gendered authority threats. They didn't have to hand protocols or procedures they could call upon but instead relied informally on colleagues or community members for help. It would likely serve women better if they and their colleagues and partner organizations were trained through simulations and other such pedagogical methods to handle various kinds of gendered authority threats. States should perhaps also undertake public education programs to raise awareness about such threats and to provide the public with clear repertoires for supporting women in positions of authority.

Conclusion: Gendered Social Relations and the State

Scholars have long suggested that gender and the nation-state are co-constitutive identity structures. Nationality, they argue, is like gender something we do, and we do it in gendered ways (Taylor 1997). The relationship between gender and nationality is not coincidental. Gender plays an important role in the symbolic construction of national identity. As scholars have noted, states frequently draw on the metaphor

of the nation as family, casting women as mothers of the nation (see Baron 2005, Pollard 2005, Botman 1999 on Egypt; Mundy 1995 on Yemen; Najmabadi 2005 on Iran). But gendered constructions can focus on themes of masculinity too, as Moallem (2005) shows through her examination of gender and sexuality in post-revolutionary Iran. In this context, Moallem found that since the Revolution was cast as a battle fought in defense of the Muslim community, men, represented as warriors, came to be seen as key agents of the Revolution and therefore of the state. Such imagery left little room for female agency, so that women represented through the symbolic figure of "veiled sister," could only lay claim to an adjunct, subordinated kind of citizenship.

Gender and nationality are also linked through the state's interest in regulating sexuality. Eros and polis are intertwined because of the nation-state's need to forge a bounded community, an imperative that necessitates the sexual policing of national boundaries through marriage and birth regulations. In addition to limiting the range of sexual and reproductive relationships considered legal in claims to citizenship rights, states also rely on gender norms and practices to regulate the reproductive capacities and modalities of its citizens, for instance by legislating birth control and abortion, marriage, divorce, extra-marital sexuality and homosexuality and even, as cases of enforced veiling suggest, gendered interactions.

In the Pakistani context, Policewomen, health workers and airline attendants, all play important parts in furthering these gender and sexuality agendas of the state. For instance, policewomen enable the state to push past gendered public-private boundaries. Search operations requiring the police to raid private homes almost always include women police, who are seen as necessary to "provide cover" for any women family members that might be in the house. Health workers provide the state with access to women citizens otherwise out of the state's reach. Since women in rural and peri-urban contexts frequently practice *purdah*, screening themselves from the gaze of unrelated men, they can only be accessed by the state through lady health workers who visit them in their home, bringing with them state-sponsored information and resources for birth control and disease management. Airline attendants not only signify gendered national identity through state-sponsored advertisements, but also provide cabin crew with the ability to address and discipline women passengers in a national context that prefers to limit interactions between non-kin men and women.

Women agents also expand the state's symbolic capacities, their visibility in various official arenas help denote the state's commitment to gender integration and egalitarian policies, and also its commitment to serving gendered citizens through the provision of women agents. These gender projects of state, as

Jamal (2015) points out, are often enacted in line with transnational aid agreements, many of which require recipient states to furnish evidence of commitment to gender mainstreaming policies. Yet, by instrumentalizing gender in service to its symbolic and relational agency, the state in effect underscores the marked quality of its women employees. By deploying women police to cross *purdah* frontiers, the state not only emphasizes the gender difference of its employees, but also reifies those same gender boundaries. Thus, policewomen, flight attendants and health workers simultaneously enact and unsettle gendered state-citizen boundaries. By occupying positions of authority vis-à-vis the state, women security workers disrupt the common gendered equations of state-citizen relationships. Through their sheer presence in these roles, they disturb gendered norms of social life in Pakistan even as they protect these norms by acting as a bridge between the male state and its female subjects.

In each of my research sites, therefore, these boundary violations provoke gendered authority threats, which the state's women agents must manage. In all three cases, women draw on performance to deal with these threats. They use performance not only as a symbolic medium, a way to say something about the kind of women they are, but also as a relational one, to connect with particular kinds of audiences or interactants and disconnect with others. Yet, performance does more than just walk and talk culture in service to women's symbolic and relational projects, it also helps animate the various hierarchies and inequalities it was assembled in the first place to manage. In her 2007 study, CJ Pascoe noted that in working to repudiate the specter of an abject identity, young people in an American high school wound up reinforcing the norms and values of hetero-patriarchy. In a similar process, Pakistani women security service workers' efforts to manage the specter of an identity spoiled via gendered authority threats also winds up working to fortify their own marginalization within these contexts. As feminist scholars focused on performative dimensions of nation making have suggested, the relationship between gender and nationality has a direction: the various quotidian dramas that stage nationality in gendered terms also work to reify gender hierarchies through those performances (Taylor 1997). Focusing on these dramas therefore, provides a window into the structures that pattern such hierarchies and also the mechanisms that sustain them.

It was a young trainee at the police academy in Karachi, who first drew my attention to the rituals and dramas of gender production and reproduction that structure inequalities within the state. I met Sameena, who went by Sam, early in my fieldwork. Sam a tall, athletic young cadet in her early 20s, was a very difficult interview subject. She shrugged off most of my earnest questions with bland indifference. No,

she didn't find anything in her new life challenging. She came from a family of workingwomen who had taught her what to expect from professional life. Sam's mother was a nurse, her aunt an airline attendant. Sam herself had been through airhostess training, even though she had had a lifelong passion for joining the armed forces. But since the Pakistan army was not yet willing to recruit women into its combat ranks, and since she had not made the cut at the federal law enforcement agency (the FIA) that she had long dreamed of joining, Sam had condescended to join the Sindh Police. She had always been active in sports, found running, marching, lifting heavy objects easy. The punctuality, cleanliness, and general discipline requirements posed no problem to Sam. She was keen to try out shooting an AK-47 and couldn't wait for Commando training to begin. None of the quotidian routines of police training were problematic for Sam. Surprisingly, what Sam did find difficult to handle, she said, was managing gendered interactions within the police academy, she didn't know how to deal with her male colleagues.

"To be honest, one thing I felt was different, about this place," she said, "Actually I have always studied in co-education (institutions), both for my schooling and my college, and I (have been used to) mixing with my (male) cousins etc. you know, in the Karachi style, so I am unable to see boys as some kind of cannibals (i.e. monsters). But here, the thing is that I find it very irritating that if you speak to a boy it's like you committed a sin," she complained. Although she had been accustomed to interacting with men all her life, she was finding it very difficult to do so at work. "Actually," she explained, "some of these poor guys come from the interior (i.e. rural parts of the province)," which meant they were unaccustomed to interacting with non-kin women. This general difficulty was aggravated because there were only five women trainees amidst more than a hundred men trainees, "there are only five of us girls here right now, so in the beginning, we also felt some apprehensions," about mixing with men, she said. I asked her to give me an example of the difficulty in managing gender mixing she was describing and she replied, "I'll tell you something that occurred in the early days, we were having a seminar on first responder training, meaning as a first responder, how will you handle a crime, control the situation, and gather evidence," she explained, "for an investigating officer this is the key job and we also got some first aid training, like how to remove a helmet (in case of an accident victim), meaning how you will open the casing. So in that what happened, there was a seat empty next to me and a boy was standing there, without a seat, and (he seemed to be) thinking, 'should I sit or not,' I said to him, 'sit nah,' and after that everyone began to think that I am too forward, too bold."

As a result, Sam says, the men tease her and the women gossip about her, "like just now, a little

while ago, we had a training session, the boys were joking, saying to the instructor, make Sam do the demonstration. The instructors had staged an accident and we had to get down on our stomach and elbows, crawl up and take the dummy's helmet off, try to make sure that the veins don't get pressed. So, the boys said, make Sam do it, make her lie down and remove the helmet. So, the class was all boys, only five of us are girls. The boys were saying make Sam lie down, make Sam do it, make the girls also do it. So here I felt a bit uncomfortable," she said, explaining, "I won't be called upon to do something like this in the real world. Men exist. They can take care of such eventualities. Now if there were no men. God forbid such a situation should arise, then I could do it. For no rhyme or reason why should I provide entertainment for people," she asked, arguing that the sight of a woman crawling on the ground would be viewed as a spectacle not only by male class fellows but also by males in the real world who happened to be milling around an accident scene. And while she saw herself as bold and fierce and in every way equal to the men, Sam was unwilling to become a titillating spectacle for them.

This dissertation project began as an investigation of cultural transformation and gendered transitions. It sought to understand how individuals socialized to a particular set of dispositions; beliefs and practices (or habitus, as Bourdieu, 1977 called it) incorporate a new, contradictory set as demanded by their work context. How do Pakistani women working security service jobs manage the clash between the generalized habitus their gendered class positions provide them with, and the specific ones that their masculinist, public jobs require? But as my conversation with Sam shows, this was the wrong question.

The problem I found was not one of acquiring new embodied competencies and dispositions at odds with prior ones; it was about managing gendered accountability regimes. Pakistani women taking on security jobs for the state weren't troubled by learning how to adapt to new more masculine kinds of body disciplines, they were anxious about crafting a gendered presentation that balanced their conflicting gendered and classed aspirations. As scholars elsewhere have noted, since gender and class intersect in complicated ways, these dimensions of identity and experience can sometimes push subjects in contrary directions. Since middle class styles and self-presentations are often constructed as the cultural norm, women engaging in the brute labors of working class jobs can frequently find their gendered identities under threat (Skeggs 1997). And it is in such a conundrum that the women described in this dissertation find themselves. As I learned in all three of my field sites, women security service workers all actively sought state jobs in pursuit of job security, health and retirement benefits, and in hopes of acquiring the dignified status of government servants. They saw security jobs as crucial avenues of class mobility. But in

taking up these jobs women were also ironically confronted with two kinds of gender and class threats to their dignity.

First, since security service jobs constrained women to engage in gendered interactions and to occupy gendered spaces and temporalities deemed unsuitable for decent women to occupy, their work places, working hours, and routine responsibilities confronted women with the cultural problem of managing stigma. This cultural problem posed threats to both class and gender dimensions of women's identities. Managing polluting interactions, nightshift work and "dirty" contexts, such as courts and police stations, posed a problem to women's gender identities as decent women. Moreover, being compelled to work in such stigmatized environments suggested financial constraint, connecting women to stigmatizing signs of belonging to an impoverished family unable to fulfil their financial needs. This construction posed a threat to women's class presentations. Second, in occupying official spaces and roles women had to manage gendered authority threats from colleagues, bosses and citizens unaccustomed or unwilling to recognize state authority in the guise of female bodies. Colleagues, including women co-workers, held women accountable to gendered presentations at odds with the requirements of their jobs, which in turn impaired women's competency at work, stalled their careers and compromised their leadership.

In short, in entering male-dominated official occupations, women were faced with the problem of doing gender in ways that allowed them to uphold their accountability simultaneously to two different gender-class systems. On the one hand, as Sam's remarks suggests, women – regardless of their class origin – struggled to signal their conformity to standards of gendered propriety consonant with working-class ideals of gender that prevailed in their workplaces. On the other, they tried to shed those gendered aspects of their particularistic social identities that risked reinforcing signs of working-class origins and impeding their ability to fulfil their professional responsibilities. As I show in each of the empirical chapters of this dissertation, women in each site managed these tensions in different ways.

Straddling accountability regimes:

Airline women, as I show in chapter 1, drew on global cultural constructions to address the class-gender paradoxes produced by their transgressive jobs. As scholars have noted, a polarizing global discourse focused particularly on gendered arrangements pits bikinis against burkas, to signify western difference and modernity against non-Western backwardness, especially in Islamic locations. By affecting a

cosmopolitan performance redolent of western beliefs and attitudes around gender, airline women appropriate these global discourses for their own ends. To manage the stigma surrounding their jobs, I found that airline enact a performance I call **circumscribed cosmopolitanism**, a set of discursive and aesthetic performances that draw on the cultural and material capital acquired through work-travel to signal airline women's distinction, constructing them as culturally superior to those who would stigmatize them. Circumscribed cosmopolitanism is a disconnecting performance, one that aims to hold interlocutors and potential critics at arms' length. By highlighting their own cosmopolitan competencies, airline women suggested that those who vilify airhostesses for transgressing gendered cultural codes are possessed with a problematic mind-set. Casting such people as ignorant and unaware, airline women presented themselves in contrast as more evolved, more educated and more competent. These superior qualities, airline women argued, were demonstrated through both their more cultured appearances and their more cultivated subjectivities. Casting themselves as agentic, independent, self-sufficient and organized, airline women constructed an image of their distinctiveness in contrast with "ordinary" Pakistani women.

Yet, these assertions were not consonant with my observations of airline women's interactions with their male colleagues. Although airline women asserted a cosmopolitan identity in their discourse, they did gender in more conventional ways in interactions with their male colleagues, and in so doing produced the same gendered inequalities in their work relationships that they disavowed in their cosmopolitan presentations. This performative discrepancy, I argue reveals airline women contrasting relational agendas. Cosmopolitan performances permit these women to distance themselves from problematic interlocutors, but since this performance is circumscribed, it allows women simultaneously to pursue a different, more conventional relational agenda with regards to their male colleagues. By seeking counsel from male colleagues, deferring to men's ideas and opinions, and turning to men for help managing professional problems and relationships, women sought to recruit these men as agents or go-betweens for help furthering various personal and professional ends. Thus, by enacting a circumscribed cosmopolitanism, women balanced the class-gender contradictions posed by their work. They simultaneously signified their fidelity to gendered norms while symbolically rejecting these norms as backward.

In chapter two I discuss how lady health workers straddled competing gender-class accountability regimes by crafting a paradoxical presentation I call **martial motherhood**, a moral performance that not only serves as a salve against the cultural problem of stigma but also acts as social glue, easing LHW's efforts at cultivating the connection with clients that is a crucial conduit of their work. As a connective,

moral performance, martial motherhood invokes morally inflected roles and idioms: forbearing woman, quasi-mystical healer, mother and holy-warrior to reframe the meaning of LHWs work, their money, and their contravention of gender norms. By enacting these morally charged roles in their encounters with clients, community members and colleagues, LHWs trade on a sense of moral community to create and solidify meaning-drenched bonds that they can leverage in service to their professional obligations.

Yet, by mobilizing performances tailored to fit with their low class and poor clients' cultural capital, LHWs reaffirm their own subordinated class positions. These classed and gendered performances mark LHWs as mismatched within the rational, bureaucratic government offices that superintend LHW activities. In their interactions with the officers in charge of health offices, LHWs come across as incompetent bureaucrats, unable to provide appropriate credentials, to correctly prepare and file reports, or to demonstrate fit within the dignified and distinctive government office, which is set apart from the classed and gendered anxieties that concern LHWs, such as sick children, indigent husbands or neighborhood respect. Thus, although martial motherhood performances provide LHWs with pleasure, dignity and fulfillment in their work as well as durable relationships in the field, they also reinforce the gender-class breaches that distinguish officer from worker, and serve to buttress working class women's ongoing marginalization and exclusion from the state they serve.

Most policewomen, as I show in chapter three, tried to signal their fidelity to classed gender norms by undertaking gendered performances I call "doing delicacy." In addition to veiling, gender segregation and retreat from the male gaze, doing delicacy involved affecting distaste for violence, coarse language, and sullied people, such as beggars, prostitutes, and adulterers. To shore up these delicate feminine personas, policewomen also relied on makeup and other aesthetic practices. For instance, Reema told me that after she began training, her mother warned her she was becoming too masculine.

> Reema: My family says that my disposition has become very hard
> Me: okay.
> Reema: only the mustaches haven't come. (laughs) the other day I was praying, yesterday, I was praying, so I think I was standing with my legs a little too wide apart, my mother comments, "going to training has turned her fully into a man, if you tear the wrapper off her, three or four men will come out from inside. (Laughs)

To temper the de-gendering effects of their mere association with police work, women turned to aesthetic practices aimed at reinforcing their femininity. Thus, several women took to visiting me at the police academy where I had been provided a room to conduct interviews, primarily for access to my bathroom, which was unusual for its privacy. They would trek all the way to my office, a long walk from their classes, just so they could wash their faces with soap. On their freshly washed faces they would smear generous lashings of a local whitening cream called Fair & Lovely, which they then supplemented with a white face powder. The entire ritual left them looking like ghosts. Laila and Sara explained the reasoning behind this ritual.

> Laila: No one will hear this right? (She laughs) so when I first came here (to the police academy), I didn't use to put on any make up, and these patches began showing up on my face, burned blackened, all over my face. The sun, the dust, and on top of that, I developed an eye infection, my lids weren't opening, my eyes were red.
>
> Sara: she had to wear sunglasses.
>
> Laila: Everyone told me, Oh Allah! You should rest. So I stopped using the water here, I got so scared and I went to a skin specialist, Ya Allah! My complexion, what has happened to me? I have become very ugly (. He said, wear sun block, and wear a paste, a thick base,
>
> Sara: sun block does no good here, look at our faces, how dark we have become
>
> Laila: so, I was telling my mother, that "people say that police officers are very ugly, but to turn us totally into a monster (*bhoot*) is this the process they use?" she stared at me, she says, what are you talking about? "You all are very beautiful." I said, yes, wait till we have done all the courses there are to do now.

These aesthetic rituals served to protect the appearance of a middle-class gendered performance incompatible with perspiring, getting tanned in the sun, or appearing unkempt.

By doing gender in ways that signaled their delicacy and incompatibility with brutal police work,

these women worked to indicate a respectable family background and a middle-class status. Yet, police work created challenges for women's aspirational performances. Prolonged exposure to the sun, outdoor work, and routine duties involving unruly crowds and criminal actors not only put paid to women's aesthetic efforts, but also belied their claims of disdain for and distance from brutality.

Jettisoning Expectation and Incongruent Performances

Each of these empirical chapters demonstrates how women seeking class mobility through the state reconcile incompatible gender and class accountability regimes by crafting performances that straddle conflicting social and cultural imperatives. They navigate the cultural problem of stigma evoked by their transgression of gendered interaction codes by doing delicacy, enacting circumscribed cosmopolitanism and performing martial motherhood. But what happens when actors jettison accountability regimes in pursuit of political rather than economic projects? What happens when actors eschew the propitiatory performances undertaken by the majority of women in a particular context and instead take on incongruent presentations that are out of step with the gendered and classed moral codes that structure these settings?

Chapters three and four take up these questions by developing the concept of incongruent performance. Together these two chapters show how the outcomes of deploying incongruent or mismatched performances can vary by gender. When women, in chapter three, eschewed "doing delicacy" in favor of male-coded "brutal" styles (e.g. spitting, cussing) in hopes of entering male-dominated corruption networks, which are crucial conduits of power in this context, they wound up alienating subordinate women. Without the help of junior women, the bosses were unable to launch a corruption venture they had hoped would ease their entry into important power networks forged around corruption practices, and instead wound up losing their leadership positions.

I use this case to develop the concept of **hobbled leadership**, a case of leadership impaired by the gendered mechanics of network constitution. If women choose to adopt performances that are congruent with their gender, they get left out of the networks that channel power within a particular setting. Bosses possessed with this kind of disembedded leadership as seen by their subordinates and colleagues as having an empty, merely formal kind of authority. Even when provided formally with leadership positions, therefore, women unable to activate patronage networks are still read as dead-switches, less able to provide or elicit favors, generate money, or mobilize resources, they continue to be seen as poor conductors of

power, hobbled in their leadership. But if women behave in incongruent ways, as I show in chapter three, they stand to lose even the cooperation of women associates, which seriously impairs their capacity because they need these women to be their eyes and ears, to expand their agency in times of absence, and to lend consequence to their office. Thus, whether women opt to undertake congruent or incongruent performance their leadership is hobbled because the scripts or performances necessary for activating networks in organizations are gendered in ways that sustain women's disadvantage at work

In contrast to the police women's experience, chapter four demonstrates how men's use of discordant performance in the aviation setting operated not only to reinforce male authority but also to silence women's voices and perspectives on issues of flight safety in the wake of a crisis. When performances "match," they accomplish congruence between actions and setting. Actors able to bring the different elements of performance (actors, symbols, observers, scene) into alignment will have the greatest success in achieving credibility and connecting with audiences. In this line of thinking, mismatched action, which violates widely held cultural expectations would likely produce cognitive dissonance amongst audiences leading them to doubt an actors' sincerity. In a similar vein, gender scholars have noted that mismatched performances comprise important tools for unsettling the established dynamics underlying the order of things (Butler 2004, Deutsch 2007). In this chapter, I argue that mismatched performances are not just a strategy available to marginalized actors interested in unsettling the gender order, but can also serve as important tools for those seeking to maintain the status quo distribution of power.

To distinguish this kind of mismatched performance from the kind described by gender theorists as a tool of change available to marginalized actors, I develop the concept of **incongruent performance**, to describe the strategic use of mismatched performance by dominant groups seeking to reset power arrangements in the wake of a crisis. By doing so, I also add to performance theory the insight that matched actions aren't constituted only through the production of accord between actor and setting, fusion, or fit draws also on the cultural expectations adhering to particular kinds of people, based on their social characteristics, such as gender, class, religion, and others. Thus, actors' ability to generate credible performances and connect with audiences is facilitated not only by cultural expectations around action and settings but also those that make certain kinds of actions, such as ritual goat sacrifice, available only to certain kinds of actors, and therefore constrain others from accessing the sacred.

The performance of goat sacrifice on an airline runway, as I show in chapter four, not only intervened in a crisis situation to reaffirm men's authority but as a gendered, sacred ritual, it also limited

women's ability to mount a counter-performance that could frame the situation in an alternate light. In short, incongruent performance involves a collective, expressive agency, a sleight of hand that powerful actors accomplish by deploying monopolized symbols and rituals (e.g. goat sacrifice) to frame interpretations and activate networks of support thereby reinforcing existing configurations of power.

Together chapters three and four suggest how cultural expectations about performative congruence work to limit women's relational capacities in the workplace. While women's efforts to forge alliances they could leverage for greater authority and effectiveness were undercut by broader cultural beliefs that cast brutal performances as incongruent with women's gender in the police case, men's efforts to do so were shored up by gendered cultural beliefs in the airline case. Jointly the two chapters shed light on the part that gendered cultural resources – including signs, rituals and symbols – can play in reinforcing the gendered distribution of power and authority within security work.

Performance and the Multiple Modalities of Agency

Scholars have noted that far from simply an abstract, macro-level structure, the state is also a complex of concrete institutions with which gendered actors interact in direct and immediate ways (see Haney 1996). Thus, the state is a compound of service-providing intermediary organizations as well as a nexus of symbolic and relational practices. As employees of the state, policewomen, health workers and airline attendants therefore are not merely individualistic, opportunistic actors working to advance their own interests, they are also agents of an agency, instruments of state provision and discipline. The various opportunities and constraints women navigate in their role as state agents don't just tell a story of these women's efforts to accomplish class mobility, they also tell us how state power comes to be constituted as gendered and unequal through these women's contentions.

To provide a more rounded view of this constitutive process, chapter 5 explores how women negotiate gender in the context of state-citizen interactions. By describing these various encounters from the women's standpoint, this chapter approaches the state from a new angle, one grounded in the perspective of some of its more humble, subordinated servants. The women's narratives highlight their struggles to occupy authority positions complicated by their gender, illuminating the unique kinds of authority threats state agents face when they represent the state in the guise of a gendered body. From the women's gendered, subordinated perspective the state's vulnerabilities, its reliance on informal and discretionary authority, and on performative modes of discipline come into sharper relief.

The data in this comparative chapter also serve to flesh out the concept of **gendered authority threats**, a theoretical tool useful for understanding a wide range of impediments women and marginalized actors face when they occupy positions of authority in various professional contexts. As gendered subjects, women navigating public space must confront a number of threats and challenges ranging from sexual harassment to incompliance and insubordination. Research suggests that even positions of leadership rarely armor women against such threats to their authority (Rospedna et al 1998). Jobs that take women into male-dominated work environments, or in those culturally coded as masculine may experience more regular and intense forms of gendered authority threats, including acts of violence such as sexual assault (Berdahl 2007).

I define gender authority threats as disruptive events occurring within what Goffman (1983) calls the "interactive order" of public space. In this thinking, interactions are founded on performances, through which actors try to define the meaning of a social situation for their interactants. But to accomplish this definition, actors need others to buy into their presentations. When interlocutors refuse to cooperate with an actor's presentation, when men harass or disobey women in positions of authority, that refusal constitutes a gendered threat to women's authority, disrupting such women's performances. Having a performance doubted is akin to losing face; it humiliates and dishonors an actor.

Gendered authority threats don't have to cross gender lines. As I show in the health worker case, they can encompass female-to-female interactions that allow women to subordinate other women on the basis of masculinist metrics of competence. Threats can also work upwards. Junior women in the police chapter for instance, refuse to recognize Huda and Sana's brutal performance as legitimate and consequently withdraw their aid to the detriment of the women bosses' goals and projects. Thus, by refusing to be activated by performances they deemed as illegitimate, subordinate women served to discipline their two women police bosses for disrupting the interactive order with incongruent performance. Together these several chapters demonstrate that costs that accountability systems extract from those who violate gender norms. Incongruence doesn't just render performance illegible, but also costs actors the support of networks and associates.

Viewing women's contentions through the lens of performance aimed at managing threats to their identity provides greater theoretical purchase on their agency. Existing research exploring women's entry into male-dominated occupations, such as the military, understands these transitions as posing either a symbolic agency problem for women or a relational agency challenge. In the first case, scholarly focus is

devoted to understanding how women in male-dominated employment contexts negotiate traditionally masculine standards of competence, such as endurance, without compromising their feminine identities (e.g. Silva 2008, Moore 2010, Sasson-Levy 2003). In the second case, they examine how women navigate gendered rituals of bonding, such as sports-talk or after-hours camaraderie at strip clubs, to manage the recruitment of associates, allies and mentors (Turco 2010, Morgan and Martin 2006, Jeffreys 2010).

By examining the assorted congruent and incongruent presentations Pakistani women enact in their different security service employment settings, however, this dissertation brings both dimensions of agency together by conceptualizing performance as a medium of both kinds of contentions. By pooling the various signs and symbols at their disposal (veils, designer purses, motherhood) women not only stitch together conflicting class and gender requirements with professional imperatives, but also accomplish several relational objectives. Thus, lady health workers enact moral performances not only to project appropriate class and gender signals but also to forge relationships with citizens within their communities that they can then rally in service to their employment obligations. This means not only recruiting friends and neighbors to lend a hand with childcare or enlisting an existing client to furnish introductions to new ones, but also using relationships cultivated through care to persuade clients to cooperate with state objectives. Similarly, airline attendants craft cosmopolitan performances not only to stave off the stigma of their spoiled work identity but also to hold clients and other disparaging interlocutors at arms' length. By not only casting themselves as distinct but also bringing this dissimilarity alive in interactions, airline attendants use circumscribed cosmopolitanism as a disconnective performance, working to produce distance between themselves and clients.

These relational contentions are instructive for the scholarship on both symbolic and relational agency. They not only reinforce arguments that suggest symbolic agency is profoundly embedded within communities of meaning but also indicate that people do gender in distinctive ways not only in an effort to disrupt and undo such structures but also to foster connection and belonging with similar-minded identity communities. For scholars of relational agency, Pakistani women's performative contentions indicate that relational exertions involve not only modalities of domination and control as implied in definitions describing such agency in terms of sending and binding (see Adams 1994, 1996, 1999, 2005, 2010, 2011), but also modalities of connection and disconnection. These modalities are typified by the connective labor lady health workers undertake and the disconnection airline attendants accomplish through their cosmopolitan performances (see also Williams 2006 for instance of workers' efforts to disconnect and

detach from clients).

Moreover, threats, as I show in chapter five, can also work as opportunities. Women can address threats by visibilizing challenges to rally dormant allies, they can activate spectacular agency to reverse the affective registers of a threatening incident, drawing on public spectacle to accomplish a ritual "unmasking" of a challenger's public face. And as the case of LHWs shows, gendered authority threats can also provide agents with opportunities to critique existing arrangements, using disruptions to raise attention to their own problematic status and vulnerabilities within an organization.

This chapter also has important policy implications. It suggests that it's not enough for organizations -- such as those connected with the state -- to pursue gender mainstreaming via quotas or recruitment drives. Gender mainstreaming policies need also include provisions for managing gendered authority threats, such as providing women with training and tools as well as policy and law for taking action against these threats when they occur. Although the Pakistani government has in recent years passed important anti-harassment legislation that my participants were aware of, in each case that I describe in chapter five, women relied on their own ingenuity to manage the gendered authority threats that confronted them in the course of their work.

Similarly, policy implications may be drawn from the challenges and failures outlined in the chapter on women police. The case of hobbled leadership underlines a relational basis for inequality reproduction. Since it is not formal policy or law, but informal, extra-legal transactions and relationships that serve to marginalize women in these employment contexts, these findings suggest that neither the law nor individual empowerment are sufficient nodes of policy intervention. Instead, since social relations and alliances are crucial vectors for the reproduction of gender inequalities encoded within the state, policy aimed at addressing these inequalities should focus on shoring up women's relational capacities and opportunities in addition to their formal competencies and authority. This could entail providing women with networking opportunities, assigning them with mentors and working to help foster the kind of alternate network culture that a senior woman police officer described as "*gulabo* gang" or Gang of Roses.

Chapter four, and the case of goat sacrifice on an airline runway, similarly highlights the ways that relational and cultural elements combine to gender the public sphere. Since performative success rests not only on access to symbolic and material resources, but also on the social relationships (e.g. gender hierarchies) that permit certain actors to monopolize these resources in time and space, this chapter sheds light on the ways that marginalized perspectives come to be excluded from public discussion, not only

through resource poverty (lack of access to modes of dissemination) but also from deprivations in symbolic power (limited authority over cultural symbols). Hence, those working to achieve a more equitable public sphere through policy or journalistic practice should take these elements of marginalization into account when collating story sources and curating perspectives about specific political issues. Policy makers in turn should focus on identifying ways to empower marginalized actors with cultural symbols and tools that can buttress their communications, allowing their perspectives also to accomplish resonance in the public arena.

Women, State and Power:

I wish to close with a story Razia, a constable at a women's police station, told me. We were approaching a Pakistani national holiday. In the various streets of Karachi, hawkers were crowding around cars to sell Pakistani flags to passengers. Razia was on her way home from work, she said, when from her rickshaw, she saw a beggar woman seated on a sidewalk, her flags scattered around her, and one caught under her foot. "I stuck my head out and yelled at her, '*haramazaadi*, (bastard) show some respect for that flag!" The rickshaw driver nearly fell out of his seat, Razia told me gleefully, while around her, men seated on motorcycles waiting for the light to turn green appeared shocked that a woman would create such a vulgar spectacle in a public space. But, Razia explained, "this country has given us so much, I couldn't stand to see its flag trampled under a beggar's foot."

This episode, which occurred towards the end of my field work, encapsulates some of the themes I have discussed in this dissertation. By focusing on the experiences of women employed in various arenas of state security work, I have demonstrated how gender and economic relations come together to limit the range of performances available to women traversing the interaction order of public space. Women get left behind in these state employment arenas not only because their working-class backgrounds deprive them of the material and symbolic resources, such as educational credentials and fair skin, that signify dignity and competence in their workplaces, but also because lacking these resources women are unable to join or activate the unofficial and informal networks that channel power in these settings. Thus, networks of patronage constitute an additional kind of economic relation, besides class and gender, that works to hinder women's mobility at work. Such networks have also been noted to disadvantage women in other national contexts and fields of work, but are rarely understood in these other arenas to represent forms of corruption. Moreover, the connection of network activation with performance has not been explicitly

highlighted in previous scholarship on gender and workplace inequalities. By bringing these different elements of workplace mobility together, this dissertation has highlighted crucial ways that signs and social relations align to reinforce women's marginality at work.

Finally, by focusing on the contentions of women security service workers, this dissertation has shed light on an important third way that economic relations disadvantage women in state work. Although the state is typically seen as an arbitrator, a source of recourse against unequal and exploitative relationships, I have shown how it is also implicated in some of the inequalities it claims to address. Thus, in the context of security service work, the state mimics the market to exploit gendered labor in pursuit of both profit and policy objectives. Through the labor of LHWs, for instance, the state maintains profitable transnational partnerships with development groups and NGOs interested in accomplishing various health outcomes in Pakistan. By pursuing gender mainstreaming policies in state sectors, such as policing, the state demonstrates its compliance with global goals and guidelines, cementing its claim to foreign aid. By relying on women's connective capacities, the state mines data from women citizens it would not otherwise be able to access.

Like the market therefore, the state draws upon the intangible gendered competencies and capacities of its workers to accomplish various representational, disciplinary and data excavation agendas. And like the market, it benefits from women's aesthetic, interactive and emotional labors, without recognizing these outlays or rewarding them. Thus, while women's cultural contentions provide various benefits to the state, they do not succeed in refashioning the state's organizational logics or metrics of evaluation. The state, in other words, remains a gendered organization despite women's contentions.

In part, this gendered reproduction occurs because some of the state's interactive arenas remain inhospitable to the gendered and classed idioms and schemas women combine to craft their performances. The women's performances therefore are difficult to sustain across the state's various institutions and settings. Performances women undertake in exclusively female arenas, like the women's police station, or the home of a health worker's client, crumble in the macho context of a police raid, or in the masculine setting of the bureaucratic state health office. Each performance falls apart because it is unable to carry the gendered idioms and symbols that embellish it into those consequential state-based interactions that prize masculine performances over feminine ones. Thus, women get left behind in state employment contexts because the schemas and idioms that animate their performances also cause them to get filtered out of those interactions that ease peoples' entry into alliances and relationships that mediate

agents' access to the economic and symbolic power vested in the state.

Women are creative in their strategies to manage the gendered authority threats that come their way, but their cultural and political contexts place institutional constraints on the extent to which they can innovate their gendered performances. The result is a constant tension between their efforts to redefine the possible and the recalcitrance of their audiences. Audiences do not only bear witness to others, however, but they also act in concert with them, an important source of interpersonal power. Women's strategies are not only performances whose success relies upon their legibility, then, but also on their capacity to marshal the actions of others. Women's advances in inclusion, power and authority depend on a future in which, equipped with transgressive gender performances, they can enlist others in their everyday lives.

Methods Appendix:

This dissertation used ethnographic methods to explore how and why women employed by the Pakistani state in security service labor come to feel tainted by their work, how they manage the feelings of indignity this belief occasions and what their conceptions and responses might mean given that these women are not just workers but also agents of the state. I collected data using ethnographic methods, starting with preliminary research with women police commandoes in Peshawar, in the north of Pakistan in the summer of 2015. From 2016-2017, I spent a year in Karachi, which is my hometown, conducting 120 interviews with women in the three field sites, 40 each with policewomen and health workers and with airline attendants. I made a follow-up visit to Karachi in early 2018 to touch base with informants and observe a Polio campaign, where I was able to observe police and health workers working in tandem as they went door to door administering the polio vaccine to children.

The Setting:

Fieldwork took place in Pakistan's "turbulent metropolis" Karachi, a city known for its "chronically

violent social configurations," that make security service concerns of paramount interest (Gayer 2014). These imperatives appeared to take on new significance as my fieldwork coincided with Pakistan's entry into a regional economic deal with China known as CPEC (China-Pakistan- Economic- Corridor), the "One Belt, One Road" project, which entailed China plowing $57 billion into a trade route running from northern parts of Pakistan that border China, all the way down to sea ports located in Pakistan's south. The deal led to a surge in infrastructure development in Pakistan, including enhanced Chinese investment in Karachi where Chinese firms began investing in energy, steel, textile and land. Shanghai Electric Power acquired Karachi's electric supply corporation for $1.8 billion, while I was in the field and a Chinese led consortium bought a strategic stake in the Pakistan Stock Exchange.

Financial analysts also understood the construction boom that seemed to break out across Karachi in that period, with skyscrapers shooting up to meet the sky, as related to Chinese corporate interest in the city, an interest further reflected by the increased patronage from Chinese citizens at Karachi's restaurants, hotels and malls. In November 2016, Chinese company Wuzung was granted a garbage disposal contract covering the south and east districts of Karachi city. These regional entanglements helped to heighten Pakistan's focus on security, transport, health and policing in Pakistan, domains relevant to my research participants' work.

Pakistan's largest city, Karachi is marked by considerable inequalities, which are reflected in the diverging fortunes of its diverse neighborhoods. Well-developed and highly resourced communities in this city give way to peri-urban, poor localities. These inequalities are reflected also in gender arrangements. Thus, in contemporary milieus of urban Karachi, *purdah* no longer refers to a strict institution of gendered seclusion but has instead devolved into a set of performative and aesthetic practices (wearing a hijab, relying on chaperones etc. calling co-workers "uncle" or "brother") that pattern relations between men and women in line with the logics of purdah or segregation. This includes the incorporation by a segment of society scholars refer to as "the new middle class" of more Arab style veiling practices (Maqsood 2017). The new middle class, comprises a cohort of traders and petty businessmen that began emerging in Pakistan the 90s in connection. Deeply involved in trade and labor migration with oil-rich Arab Gulf states, the new middle class supported the spread of Arabization and sterner interpretations of Islam in Pakistani society, on the one hand emphasizing male authority in the family, but on the other affording greater mobility for women in public spaces through the rise of Arab-style veils such as the hijaab (Jamal 2013, Hussein 1997). The interests of this group are also reflected in Karachi through the

proliferation of shops selling Islamic books and CDs, Arab style *abayas* (or full-length robes worn by women to obscure their bodies), and small-scale religious teaching centers. While, elites mostly eschew such veiling practices and the new middle relies on hijabs and abayas, gender arrangements can be quite different in peri-urban contexts settled by rural migrants, refugees and settlers hailing from Pakistan's other provinces, where women continue to practice more traditional forms of *purdah.* In these areas, some women attempt to altogether avoid the gaze of non-kin men by wearing *burkahs* (traditional full body veils), and limiting their contact with non-kin men. Thus, purdah spanning women state agents are vital to the state's security agendas within this metropolis.

I arrived in Karachi in June 2016, at the start of *Ramadan*, the holy month of fasting. I took up residence in *Saddar*, a downtown neighborhood situated in the heart of the city and lying within the remit of "district south," a section of the city designated as a "high security," "red zone" because of the location here of multiple "sensitive installations" including the high courts, the Karachi Stock Exchange, various military buildings, governmental bureaus including the Sindh Secretariat and the Governor's house, the residence of the American Consul General, the Japanese and Iranian consulates, Karachi's Cantt railway station and the sprawling, state run Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Center.

Living in this densely populated, raucous, neighborhood, I was inducted into the rhythms and disruptions that characterize life in Karachi, including for instance, having scheduled meetings complicated by episodes of "firing" at nearby Zainab Market, as well as more quotidian disruptions and delays caused when VIP movements jammed traffic for as much as an hour at a time. Traffic on Abdullah Haroon Road, which ran across the front of my apartment building, would periodically come to a standstill as white uniformed traffic cops, some with rifles slung across their breasts, stopped, in order to provide safe passage to long VIP cavalcades, that swooshed by in a flash of red lights and wailing sirens. When especially important VIPs visited the city, friends in my field sites would advise me to stay home.

Making my way to and from fieldwork in various parts of the city, I became used to seeing, tall, broad shouldered police commandos, who showed up from time to time on the banks of the roads in district South. Dressed all in black, armed with rifle, their fingers on triggers and their faces hidden behind dark glasses and caps, these security personnel would stomp around peering into cars. I became inured to careering past trucks full of paramilitary "rangers," lean and rugged, dressed in khakis and scowls, glaring over their rifles at my bobbing rickshaw. Also, familiar, was the sight of police mobiles perennially stationed outside the various alleys and side streets of my neighborhood, filled with cops in dark grey shirts

and khaki pants, with sagging bellies and worn-out faces, idly smoking cigarettes and swatting flies. No less unusual was the sight of private water tankers plying water, and rickshaws carting gas cylinders to gated apartment buildings secured by attentive guards and obtrusive cameras.

The steady hum of traffic never seemed to quiet down in this throbbing district, it was interspersed with the sounds of private generators that picked up where the state supplied electricity gave off. Daylight hours were punctuated by the ceaseless sounds of construction, grinders humming and hammers banging, as this formerly sleepy, colonial era enclave of rambling houses transformed rapidly into a dense mass of high-rise buildings standing cheek to jowl in the smog of Karachi's traffic. A veritable army of eagles circled the skies above, drawn by the beds of meat some residents laid out in *sadqah*, a propitiatory gesture meant to ward off ill luck. I learned to try and avoid scheduling meetings on Fridays, when male worshippers spilled out of over-full mosques and lined up on various main roads and side streets for Friday prayers choking traffic with their bodies, their cars parked helter-skelter on the streets.

The various bodies filling the streets and byways of my neighborhood and in neighborhoods where I worked---guards, policemen, worshippers and passersby- were primarily male. Day maids crossed my lane twice a day, to and from the bus stop, wrapped up in black *abayas*, faces masked with black cloth, warding off the glances of gawking security guards.

My Saddar neighborhood was a far cry from the quieter, more affluent Defense Housing Authority (DHA) locality I grew up in. This more elite area is located about a 30-minute drive away, across the Clifton Bridge that roughly hews the city into two halves, the cosmopolitan, westernized elites on one side, the rest of the city on the other. I grew up in a peripheral part of the affluent DHA neighborhood that stands aloof from the smog of the city center, hugging the beaches of Seaview and fanned by the breeze of the Arabian Sea. In that swath of the city, apartment buildings are rare, houses are far more common, they stand in tree-lined streets, considerably less polluted by the fumes of heavy traffic. Neighborhoods get richer the further southwest you go. There, closer to the Korangi Creek and the Saudi Consulate, is where the rich landlords of agricultural land, politicians, industrialists and army generals live. Houses are set back from the street, ringed by tall boundary walls and sheltered by palm trees and bougainvillea bushes. Security is provided by private companies and is supplemented in these neighborhoods by police vans and armed police, stationed behind bunkers made up of sacks of sand. In some of the alleys in these neighborhoods, barricades have been erected to slow down traffic and permit security personnel to peek inside cars. Schools attended by elite children in these neighborhoods are all secured by sandbag bunkers

and armed guards. There's a McDonald's restaurant nestled against the beach, not very far from the luxurious, air-conditioned Dolmen mall. You can't enter either without passing through metal detectors and submitting your possessions to a search by male and female security guards.

In the more modestly affluent fringe of DHA, where I grew up, my neighbors had included architects, doctors, mid ranking army officers and high court judges. Men tended to dress in westernized pants and button-down shirts; *abaya*-wearing women were not a common sight, although some women covered themselves up with large *dupatta* scarves, adopting a form of veiling more traditional to this context than the imported Arab style black *abaya* gown that the emerging middle class made up of petty traders appears to favor. Women in my former neighborhood worked as teachers, doctors, lawyers, and one woman, three houses down, was a member of parliament.

In Saddar, where I lived during my fieldwork, my nearest neighbors included small (but very wealthy) traders, builders and car salesmen, scions of the emerging middle class that began acquiring wealth and political clout under Zia-ul-Haq's regime in the 1980s. These people were vocal about their affiliation with *Jamaat-i-Islami*, a religiously oriented political party that espouses gendered roles for men and women. Men dressed in *shalwar kameez* and preferred going out on small motorcycles, rarely taking out their luxury cars, which stood in the underground parking garage, safe under the vigilance of security cameras. Few women in my Saddar apartment building had finished college, most practiced veiling, never going out without their *abayas* and facemasks and never going out singly. Apartments buildings in the vicinity appeared highly securitized, circled by high walls that gave onto heavy, solid gates manned by watchmen. Police mobiles were scattered here and there in the streets. Most cars were driven and maintained by chauffeurs, who also maintained a watchful surveillance of passersby.

In contrast, most of my research participants lived far away from the city center and from the beach. Their homes were located towards the east and west of the city, in neighborhoods such as *Golimar*, (which literally means bullet-shot), and in Saffura Chowk, and Malir. They had to change 2-3 buses to get to work, an arduous journey that could take up two hours of time each way. These buses had no air-conditioning, many belched out black fumes. The buses were often overcrowded, passengers spilling out of the vehicle's various cavities, while some perched precariously on the roof, and a few hung off metal ladders welded in the back. The buses often have a small reserved "ladies" section in the front but when the press of passengers gets too much, men may get pressed into this area as well. Policewomen and health workers told me that they couldn't do much more than collapse by the time they got home after work, in

terrible moods, with pounding headaches. The homes they invited me into were tiny, with rooms as small as parking slots. Some of these women cooked over makeshift wood burning stoves, telling me sheepishly that they hadn't got a gas connection. Gas cylinders can cost $50 a pop and piped gas, subsidized by the state, was becoming harder to get with the boom in construction.

The neighborhoods my research participants lived in felt more open to the sky; buildings were not as high and not as closely huddled. Boundary walls, where they existed at all, were not very tall and police presence was thin. Most of these residents had mugging stories to tell, of "*dacoits*" (bandits) who jumped in over the walls at night looting jewelry, the predominant mode of capital investment favored by many of these women. People also warned me to be wary on my way to and from these neighborhoods, I was told it was common at traffic lights to get targeted by armed cell phones snatchers. Roads in these neighborhoods were badly broken and rutted. Sewage sometimes spilled into alleys and byways. When I began my fieldwork in July 2016, huge mounds of garbage banked the streets in many of these localities. Ragged boys carrying sacks under their arms would pick at this garbage, looking for things they could sell or salvage. Flies and mosquitos abounded. By March 2017, neat little waste collection bins had begun to appear in district east and south, put there by the Chinese firm taking over garbage management in many parts of the city.

The women in these neighborhoods were veiled in various ways, some wearing abayas, some just hijabs, others wrapped in more traditional stoles. In some places, even little girls wore scarves over their pigtails. Residential pockets were strung like pearls threaded by long stretches of roughly hewn, shack-like shops, packed in a single-story riot of tiles, car parts, cellphones and pirated DVDs. Carts and trolleys speckled the store front, selling cigarettes and betel leaf, sand baked corn, second hand clothes and roasted yams peppered with spice and laid out on sheets of recycled paper. Rickshaws, motorbikes, vans and donkey-drawn-wagons stood strewn in the banks beyond. Hurtling past these commercial strips in a rickshaw, I felt wary of mugging and would hide my recorder in a zippered pocket in my track pants, carrying a cheap $5 cell phone in my bag.

People I spoke to claimed an assortment of political affiliations and varying degrees of religious intensity. Women appeared to veil or not veil in deference to context rather than Muslim identity, for instance, policewomen, for the most part, wore their hair loose and gleaming at weddings and parties, in ponytails, buns or braids at the women-only *thanas*. Women wore scarves under their uniform caps at the training academy and put on full body covering *abayas* when setting out from the academy or the station. I

followed them in these practices, wrapping my head and my face up with a veil while riding taxis and rickshaws, covering my head at police stations and leaving my hair loose when alone amongst women. Women in each of my sites, particularly middle-aged ones, lectured me as you would a child, telling me from the get go how I should dress and comport myself. Policewomen advised me earnestly to put on an *abaya* when venturing out on the streets. At my very first visit to the airline offices, however, an airhostess counselled me to never show up without blow dried hair or lipstick, "its disrespectful!" she said sternly, "to yourself and to the person you are meeting." She explained "a person must meet others with *dhang* (tact and bearing)." Meanwhile a Lady Health Worker became angry with me because assuming it signaled married status, she had taken my nose piercing as a license to go into elaborate detail about sexual practice and birth control methods.

Given that gender and security are both highly sensitive topics in this setting, gaining access to the women security workers and to their places of work was an arduous yearlong, uncertain project that provided important insights into the state's modalities of control. Gaining access was a cascading process; the key was to get one VIP to say yes, and others would, sometimes reluctantly, follow. I was indebted in particular to a close friend I had known since my days working as a journalist in Karachi. A well-known TV anchor, she worked the phone and called in favors to help me schedule meetings and connect with decision makers. In the end, the Inspector General of Police paved my way in by granting me informal and verbal permission to talk to policewomen. Once that hurdle had been crossed, other actors, in health and aviation became more willing to grant me access as well, also informally and verbally. Access was always tenuous; high-ranking men remained suspicious of my motives and reluctant to let me do much beyond interviewing. Women on the other hand were much more receptive and much more willing and keen to invite me home, take me along on jobs, or introduce me to colleagues and friends.

Methods:

Three kinds of methods were used to analyze how and why women security workers experience and manage stigma connected with their gender bending work: (1) primary data comprised 120 in-depth interviews with the women, including 40 interviews with police women, 40 with LHWs and 40 interviews with airline attendants. Interviews were recorded on tape, and transcribed for analysis. I also conducted 15 interviews were with government nurses, and although these provided me with helpful background information about health work in Pakistan, they are not presented in this dissertation. All interviews were

conducted in Urdu by the researcher who is a native speaker. Interviews were recorded on tape and transcribed for analysis. Each interview lasted an average of 2 hours, with the shortest one-hour and the longest five hours in duration. Transcription was assisted through a grant from the National Science Foundation.

(2) Interview data was contextualized via observations of the women's workplaces, their training sessions and meetings, their homes, and their interactions with senior officials and with citizens. I visited my participants at their homes, went shopping with them, tagged along on some of their duties, attended meetings and training sessions with them, looked at pictures of their children, tasted food they had cooked, shared my own cooking, met their family members and colleagues.

In particular, I spent quite a lot of time at five sites. At the women's police station in district south and at a police-training academy located in the west of the city where new recruits are inaugurated into police work and older cops return for pre-promotion refreshers and advanced training. My work with LHWs took me to a government hospital in Nazimabad where Lady Health Workers collect for a week each month to submit reports, participate in meetings and attend workshops; I also visited to a district hospital in Shamsheer (a made-up name) where lady health supervisors held meetings with the LHWs working under them. At PIA, I spent time at the PIA union office where airhostesses came to tinker with their schedules, to exchange news, and to report problems, as well as the briefing room, an official area where airline attendants gather to get briefed prior to boarding aircrafts.

(3) Secondary data included textual analysis of training manuals, official websites, and news coverage of the women's activities, and helped provide insight into the broader social context within which these women were located. Data analysis followed Burawoy's extended case method (1997, 2000), which requires an ongoing engagement with theory throughout the data-gathering process. Data interpretation also relied on Fretz and Shaw's recommendation (2011) to institute a procedure that commences with an open-ended examination of emerging themes, codes and developments in the field, progressing to a focused line-by- line coding of field notes and interview transcripts once data gathering is complete. NVivo was used during the focused coding phase of data analyses.

Broader Context:

Beyond this immersion into the women's lives, my conversations with them were also framed by broader encounters not directly related to my field sites. Friends and former colleagues, for instance,

would remark when they heard what I was doing, "well, I hope you know that airhostesses are great liars!" These sorts of off-hand comments from actors outside my field sites, from NGO workers for instance, and from elite women, drove home for me the extent to which boundary-spanning women are stigmatized in this context. Indeed, I found that my work with these women also tainted me, making me the butt of jokes and also subject to exclamations of shock and horror. "Decent women do not go to police stations," I was told and they do not talk to crude, working class women about condoms, chat up airhostesses or visit prisons. At a wedding, one woman I met took a cynical view of my research, advising me that such work was only worth doing if it caused "foreign funds to flow" into my bank account. Some people appeared to feel put out by my use of rickshaws, telling me that if I must do this work I should travel in a chauffeur driven car, and take armed guards along with me. Elite women I had known since childhood would curl their lips and ask me why in the world I was focusing on "dangerous *illaqas* (neighborhoods)" and "fishy, shady women." Airhostesses in particular were denigrated, presumed to be sleeping with pilots, politicians, and passengers. They were also taken to be involved in smuggling and money laundering. Policewomen were presumed to be corrupt and cruel, useful only for beating confessions out of thieving maidservants. Meanwhile LHWs were seen as quintessential victims of poverty and desperation, but also presumed to be cheats who stole government provided medicines and condoms, selling these for personal gain. In short, none of these women were deemed worthy of my attention. Instead, middle class and elite people suggested that I interview *aalima* (female religious scholars) or women air force pilots.

But in conversation with various women more directly connected to my field sites, I also learned that the stigma attendant upon women breaching public space is not exclusive to these particular jobs. Relatives of LHWs employed as teachers in an all-girls school for instance, or as factory workers employed in gender-segregated environments, claimed that they too were not free from taint for venturing beyond the domestic threshold. Similarly, traditional women healers (i.e. those who had completed *hakeem* or homeopathy courses) argued that people presumed all kinds of things about them too. The stigma of leaving the domestic sphere and entering the workforce appears to taint a large swath of working class women, hitting cops, airhostesses and LHWs hardest since they travel furthest from home, work night shifts and are unable to avoid working shoulder to shoulder with men. Women's claims of being tainted by work are put in perspective by statistics and prior studies related to women's participation in the public sphere in Pakistan.

Women and The Workplace In Pakistan:

At the time of my fieldwork, Pakistan was ranked second from last (out of 130 countries) on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report (WEF 2016) that is based on an index measuring parity between men and women in four areas: educational attainment, health and survival, economic opportunity and political empowerment. Gender relations in many parts of Pakistan are strongly sexualized and are regulated through veiling and *purdah* (the gendered segregation of women) (Besio 2006, Mirza 2002, Papanek 1973). Only a small percentage of women engage in formal employment, with women's participation standing at 15.8 percent against men's 48.1 percent in 2014-15 (Pakistani Economic Survey 2015-16). The gap is wider in urban areas than in rural, women's participation in urban employment stands at only 10% against men's 79%. A report published by the Agriculture Development Bank suggests that labor force participation in Pakistan remains low even among women with high levels of educational attainment, only 25% of Pakistani women who have a university degree work outside the home (ADB 2016).

Women leaving home for work are seen to be violating norms (Ali 2012). A World Bank study (2006) reports that women's work is stigmatized in Pakistan and that women who work outside the home are not considered respectable. Accordingly, the study indicates that 40% of non-working women surveyed said they did not work because their male relatives did not allow it; 15% of non-working women said that they themselves had no wish to work. A third of women who did wish to work said they wished to do so from home. 30% women of the women who worked did so without leaving home. Women who left home for work did not travel distances as great as men did (World Bank 2006). This reluctance to travel too far from home may be understood in light of a small, non-representative survey of Karachi women, which reports that 85% of workingwomen claimed they had been harassed on public transport in the past year (ADB 2016). Unsurprisingly, female labor force participation is positively associated with vehicle ownership in a household (Ejaz 2007).

When Pakistani women do venture beyond the home for work, scholars have found that they prefer to work in jobs necessitated by and facilitating gender segregation (Gazdar 2008, Mirza 2002, Papanek 1971, Weiss 1984), such as teaching girls, or providing medical care for women (Papanek 1973). Workers and workplaces accommodate to purdah logics in offices and factories by providing segregated workspaces (Mirza 2002, 1999, Papanek 1971, Wiess 1984). Scholars' have also detailed the strategies that urban women deploy to reconcile their employment with *purdah* norms, these include developing

informal ties with male colleagues and their families and so deploying existing mechanisms for social control over men's behavior. Women also integrate male colleagues into a fictive kinship system using terms such as brother or uncle to make men feel responsible for protecting them (Mirza 1999). Still, working women may have to put up with accusations and assumptions about sexual abuse calling their honor into question (Syed 2008). Moreover, women have been found to work on their emotions in order to meet the conflicting demands of social and organizational contexts (Syed 2010,2008, Syed and Ali 2006). Since there are no clear rules guiding the interaction between men and women outside of kinship structures, it falls upon individuals to interpret and negotiate the appropriateness of their interactions (Syed 2010, Marsden 2008, Syed and Ali 2006). But this individual negotiation is complicated by the state's encouragement in the 1980s, of communal vigilantism (Jafar 2005) which, appeared to give "everyone the license to pass judgment on the "morality" of people in public spaces, the prime indicator of which seemed to be women's apparel and presence" (Mumtaz and Shaheed, 1987: 72). Since women have come to embody family honor (Papanek 1973, Paster 1974) they are more often subject to seclusion in time and space and to restriction in activity (Besio 2006, Hausmann et al 2010, Weiss 1998). And even though the law prohibits extra marital sex for both men and women, the onus of displaying appropriateness fall primarily on women, who are also more likely to face harsh negative consequences for crossing unclear lines. According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 1276 women were killed for honor between 2014-2016. 400 of these killings were not registered as complaints with the police; most of the killings involved the use of guns.

Navigating Privilege:

While the women I studied for this dissertation project were primarily working class, they knew me as a middle class woman who was living and studying in the US and had returned to Pakistan for research. As a strange and quixotic insider who was also outsider, women seemed to think of me as childlike, requiring patient and careful instruction into the mechanics of local processes, and also safe to confide in. Thus, while men in each of my field sites used various strategies to restrict and manage my access, (i.e. subjecting me to long wait-times, asking for repeated submissions of written requests for access etc.) women were very welcoming of my presence and my questions. In each site, I felt that their keenness to participate in my research was driven by various personal interests. At the women's police station, for instance, Huda welcomed

my research as she hoped that my work would attract international development funds to be directed more specifically towards the improvement of women's status in the police force. Other women hoped that I would reveal to donors and other interested outsiders, how aid funds came to be misused in ways that added to the burdens women faced. And yet other women hoped that I would present a more balanced portrait of Pakistani life to foreign, especially American readers, who they thought saw Pakistan only as the home of radical versions of Islam. To such readers, women wished to communicate the depth and complexity of their visions and aspirations.

Since they hoped to gain something from my research, women also sought to control and manage it in various ways. LHWs and policewomen were both keen to teach me how interviews and observations should be conducted. My western modes were too nice, they argued, as they enacted for me the gestures and tones I should use to elicit confidences from my respondents. As they modeled these techniques of voice and interaction for me, I came to see the ways that performance was linked in their work with various relational agendas. To win over subjects of research, they suggested, I needed to embrace performative styles aimed at fostering intimacy and friendship, I needed to speak in soft and dulcet tones, to frequently repeat the subjects' name, to touch her hand or her knee and to ask a great deal of personal questions about her children and her siblings.

Although my middle class and expat status facilitated rapport with my participants, my privilege could do little to protect me from the hardships women faced in these state-based arenas. Like my participants, I also had to manage the lack of access to bathrooms, the difficulty of traversing a sprawling city often clogged with heavy traffic and the insecurity of working in high risk locations. For instance, on my way to the police academy one day, I was overtaken on the road by a dozen ambulances, which whizzed past me with sirens blaring. This occurred a day after a terrorist attack in another city had targeted a police installation, causing several deaths. I was struck with fear that I might be caught up in a similarly high-risk situation but was unable to stop or turn back on account of traffic. I rang up various journalists I knew to try and find out what was going on. No one had any information. Nor did the police at the academy know what was happening when I got there. Later, we found out that a fire had broken out at a ship breaking yard located nearby and the ambulances had been headed that way. Experiences like this one, provided me with unique insights into the fears and difficulties that my participants divulged in their interviews.

As one police women said, as she described a near death experience in connection with a recent bomb blast in the city, "when the whole city is running away from such events, we have to run towards them." The fears and vulnerabilities I encountered in my field work brought home for me the difficulties women navigate in the course of their work. Given the risk they confront and the hardships they overcome, their subordination and marginalization within these field sites became all the more puzzling.

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