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## The 2006 Anti-'Danish Cartoons' Riot in Lahore: Outrage and the Emotional Landscape of Pakistani Politics

Amélie Blom

**Abstract.** How can a long-distance outrage provoke social protest, even riots? The street demonstration against the 'Danish cartoons' that took place in Lahore on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2006 was primarily an expressive protest, publicly voicing its anger and moral discontent. As such, it offers a fruitful micropolitical site to understand how emotions contribute to shape the culture of dissent in contemporary Pakistan. Based on interviews with protestors, this article elaborates, first, on the linkages between anger, honour, the cognitively framed belief of being 'provoked', and biographical emotional repertoires. Second, it looks at the conflicting emotions displayed in the public arena: a desire of *communitas* yet destruction, an expression of compulsory feeling but subversive emotions as well. Finally, it argues that this protest has to be placed in the larger framework of the state's singular politics of emotion that informs public debates in Pakistan, and particularly so in Punjab. Hence, the article focuses on a dimension often neglected in the literature on emotions and social movements: the emotional-institutional context.

[1] A group of Internet bloggers recently identified a young (bearded) man from Srinagar: a gesticulating demonstrator with eyes blazing, shouting frenzied slogans against the 'Danish cartoons', the Pope's salvo on Islam, Israeli repression in Palestine, and the granting of a knighthood to Salman Rushdie, etc<sup>1</sup>. 'Spotting the Islamic Rage Boy' is now a blogging pastime, and mocking the 'fanatic other' a merchandising enterprise<sup>2</sup>. Yet no one knows why he feels so strongly about such diverse 'Islamic causes', nor 'what moral visions inspire [his] outrage about often-distant practice and institutions' (Jasper 1997: 5). No one even knows his name. Based on interviews with some of the protestors who took to the streets against the 'Danish cartoons' on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2006 in Lahore, this article is an attempt to unveil the selfhood of this emblematic figure of an outraged protestor, and to take his emotions seriously.

[2] Academics have long considered emotions devoid of any explanatory power in our understanding of social protests (Goodwin *et al.* 2004: 413). Trained in the Weberian tradition that 'it is convenient to treat all irrational, affectually determined elements of behaviour as factors of deviation from a conceptually pure type of rational action' (Weber 1978: 6), they have somehow 'managed to ignore the swirl of passions all around them in political life' (Goodwin *et al.* 2001: 1). But movements' opponents know that public 'passions' can hardly be ignored: political leaders spend a great deal of time in convincing that they are manipulated<sup>3</sup>, while challengers try hard to present them as nothing else than sheer opportunism (as proven by the stigmatised 'Rage boy').

[3] Although emotions alone cannot tell us *why* an individual joins a protest, they do have an explanatory power. First, and as tautological as it might seem, no organisation can mobilize potential protestors if these were not initially *affected* and *moved*, or 'emotionally disturbed' (as one the participant to the Lahore's demonstration put it). Second, emotions are 'a way of being-in-the-world, a relationship between oneself and one's situation' (Solomon 1984: 250); as such, they shape how disturbing events are specified and how an opponent's intentions are qualified. Third,

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<sup>2</sup> A clock is sold online with this inscription: 'Question: What time is it, Rage boy? Answer: Time to die infidel' ([http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Kashmirs\\_Rage\\_Boy\\_invites\\_humour/articleshow/2164387.cms](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Kashmirs_Rage_Boy_invites_humour/articleshow/2164387.cms))

<sup>3</sup> In a public address on 19th September 2001, Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf (1999-2008) warned that 'religious leaders inclined towards making emotional decisions [should not] be allowed to hold the sane majority as a hostage' and stop it to side with the United States in the 'war on terror'.

through their public performance, emotions can have 'significant structural and action consequences' (Flam & King 2005: 4): the anti-'Danish cartoons' riot in Lahore did not erupt in a vacuum but in the context of a (not carefully) staged drama of righteous anger and protestors themselves reclaimed the right to be politically angry.

[4] This particular protest is interesting for several reasons. First, the military-controlled government lifted its previously imposed ban on all outdoor meetings for this occasion. Second, the protest was organized not by the usual 'Islamist suspects' but by a small Barelwi group<sup>4</sup>, the Tahaffuz-e-Namoos-e-Risalat Mahaz ('Front for the Protection of the Honour of Muhammad's Prophecy', or TNRM). Third, it turned into a riot, a rare phenomenon in Lahore. Fourth, the riot was mainly provoked not by a *lumpenproletariat* marauding mob but young middle-class men, college students, and street boys. The localization of the riot was even more intriguing given that, two days later, another Barelwi group organized a peaceful demonstration in Karachi, a city much better known than Lahore for its urban violence.

[5] Lahore is the second-largest city in Pakistan - with a population of about 7 million people at the time of the protest - and is the political, cultural, and economic centre of the Punjab province (60% of the population). Contrary to Karachi, it is not ethnically divided: 85% of its population is Punjabi-speaking and 94% is Muslim. It is also a Pakistan Muslim League (PML) stronghold: a party then divided between the ruling pro-Musharraf faction (PML-Q) and that led by the exiled former Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif (PML-N). The city has often been the nucleus of anti-government movements: the anti-Ahmadi<sup>5</sup> riots in 1953 (Pakistan's first experience with martial law), the 1968/69 movement against General Ayub Khan that led to his being ousted from

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<sup>4</sup> Sunni Islam is divided among three main doctrinal orientations in Pakistan whose interpretation of the sources of religious authority differs. The Ahl-i-Hadith reject the Hanafi *fiqh* (followed by the two others), rely only on the Quran and *hadith* and claim to 'purge' Islam from 'heterodox' Sufi practices. Deobandis preach a self-consciously reformist faith centred on the mosque and madrasa alone. Barelwis (naming themselves, as the 'Ahl-i-Sunna wa Jamaat', lit. 'people of the [prophetic] way and the [majority] community') on the contrary lay special emphasis on Sufi devotional practices and the intercessor power of the Prophet, the great saints of the past and the living *pir*. Barelwi doctrine was established under the guidance of a Qadiri preacher, Ahmed Riza Khan (1856-1921). On the history of this movement, see Sanyal (1996).

<sup>5</sup> A reformist Islamic sect formed in 1880s-90s, in Punjab, by Ghulam Ahmad. Though his position was quite ambiguous (equating his status with that of the Prophet but also stating to be only a 'reflector prophet'), his opponents accused him of contradicting Islam's central tenet of the finality of the prophecy. Ahmadis (0,5% of the Pakistani population according to – unreliable - official figures) were declared a non-Muslim minority by the Pakistani government in 1974.

power, and the 1977 *nizam-i-mustafa* ('system of the Prophet') movement that resulted in Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's downfall.

[6] The anti-'Danish cartoons' riot in Lahore did not bring any major political change and General Musharraf stayed in power for another two years. Yet it offers an interesting micropolitical site for analyzing how the culture of dissent has evolved in contemporary Pakistan and how emotions operate in this process:

From the microlevel processes by which bystanders become participants, to the emotional repertoires that activists draw upon when pitching their case in different settings, to the organizational mechanisms through which particular emotions are managed, to the macrostructural shifts responsible for making certain emotions legitimate motivations for protest (Goodwin *et al.* 2004: 414).

[7] This research map can usefully be applied to the anti-'Danish cartoons' protest in Lahore. At the micro-level, emotions such as anger and love, linked to specific moral judgment (honour) and cognitive appraisal (Muslims are being tested by a worldwide conspiracy), eventually motivated protestors to react. Yet, only emotional repertoires, embedded in individual biographies, can explain how this inclination translated into effective action: the activist career of the procession's chief organizer, a Bareilwi *alim*, offers here a fascinating example. At the macro-level, during the protest itself, the emotions displayed proved hard to manage and a riot broke out. They were indeed highly conflicting: a desire for eternal *communitas* yet destructive anger, an expression of compulsory and morally valued feelings yet of outlawed emotions. Based on the testimony of a rioter, I argue that this was informed by the inner conflicts and emotional warfare at work within the crowd.

[8] This testimony also reveals how significant are historically shaped local *imaginaires* of outrage. This leads me to address the wider emotional-institutional landscape that in Pakistan makes certain emotions (such as anger against perceived blasphemy) and symbolic causes wherein Muslim-ness is at stake 'legitimate motivations for protest'. The state's politics of emotion, largely neglected by the literature on emotions and social movements (probably so as a reaction to the structuralist models that previously dominated the field), is impossible to ignore when studying patterns of dissent in Pakistan.

### **The mechanism of the 'Danish cartoons' outrage**

[9] Let us first examine how the 'mechanism' or '*dispositif*' of the outrage over the Danish 'cartoons' evolved. A demonstration against this prototypical form of 'outrage' that a blasphemy is needs certain key prerequisites to set it in motion (Favret-Saada 1992: 257): (i) an institutional setting or pre-existing repertoire of virtual interpretations and public sanctions (the existence of the blasphemy laws in Pakistan in this case), (ii) a person or body to denounce the 'outrage' (here, the organisations that called for the demonstration), (iii) a referent who is denounced as having 'outraged' (the Danish cartoonists), and (iv) a given authority called to intervene (the Pakistani government).

[10] One missing piece also has to be taken into account: outrage often operates as a mirror process. The very idea of drawing the 'cartoons' resulted from a sense of indignation. Incensed by what it perceived as the growing self-censorship of European artists and writers when publicly talking about Islam in a post-9/11 context, the editorial team of the Danish daily newspaper *Morgenavisen Jyllands-Posten* decided to conduct an 'in vivo' experiment by inviting cartoonists to draw the Prophet of Islam 'as they saw him'. Among the twelve 'cartoons' that were published on 30 September 2006, three, clearly depicting the Prophet Muhammad<sup>6</sup>, provoked an international wave of protest.

[11] The 'Danish cartoons' controversy has another interesting characteristics: it was an instance of long-distance outrage, and transmitters proved critically important in 'exporting' and framing it in such a way that would echo elsewhere. A Denmark-based *imam*<sup>7</sup> played this role: he compiled a file in Arabic containing all the 'cartoons', including more outrageous ones that were never printed<sup>8</sup>, and toured the Middle East. Protests erupted first in Gaza and spiralled in February across Syria, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iran, India, Malaysia, and Pakistan, resulting in about 140 deaths. The media played a crucial part in trans-nationalising the issue.

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<sup>6</sup> Brandishing a sword while two women stand behind him with only frightened eyes uncovered (1); standing on a cloud to stop suicide bombers from getting into heaven because 'our stock of virgins has run out' (2); wearing a turban with a lighted bomb with a face looking like the stereotypical villain (3). The other drawings were less explicit or understandable only in the Danish context.

<sup>7</sup> Ahmed Abu Ladan, a Palestinian by birth close to the Egyptian Gamaat Islamiyya, who settled in Denmark as a political refugee in 1984. On his biography and on the meaning of this 'affair' in the Danish context, see Favret-Saada (2007).

<sup>8</sup> Such as the photograph of a man with a pig's ears and snout, presented as a 'Western' representation of the Prophet, but later identified as an old picture from a French 'pig-squealing' contest.

Indeed, the object of outrage was invisible in most Muslim countries where the 'cartoons' had been banned (as in Pakistan).

[12] Events interestingly followed a script similar to that of the 'Rushdie affair' eight years earlier (Blom 1999): protests started in the denouncers' regions of origin, small Europe-based Islamic organisations competed for a monopoly over representing Islam, and they internationalised the issue after they had failed to succeed locally. Sympathetic governments (Iran in 1989 and Egypt in 2006) took the lead to divert attention from uneasy domestic situations. In similar fashion, the controversy turned into a worldwide discursive war opposing abstract conceptual pairs: freedom of expression vs. religious feelings, humour vs. insult, tolerance vs. fundamentalism, enlightenment vs. obscurantism.

[13] This is how we were propelled into what Fethi Benslama (2006: 110) rightly calls the age of 'global outrage /.../ characterized by the disqualification of everything by everyone' on a worldwide scale. Yet, he is wrong in assuming that 'Muslim masses marched at the call of the emotional plague of humiliation launched by Quranic lunatics' (Benslama 2006: 111). Islamic activism and collective mobilization for 'Muslim causes' continue to be detrimentally perceived as too idiosyncratic, and grounded in too distinctive a mentality and social milieu, to be addressed as a social movement that can be approached with the same analytical tools as employed for contentious politics in North America or Europe. This resistance prevents us from understanding that they actually 'transcend the specificity of 'Islam' as a system of meaning, identity, and basis of collective action' (Wiktorowicz 2004: 3).

[14] It also prevents us from seeing their routinised yet 'artful' - to borrow James Jasper's metaphor (1997) - repertoires of collective action. After the 'cartoons' were republished in February 2008, for instance, Lahori drivers discovered a large rather frightening, anonymous, signboard that stated: 'We Peacefully Condemn Blasphemy. Checklist for a Journey to Hell: War, Drugs, Danish Products' and ended with the unconsciously unfortunate line 'Have a Safe Journey!' Two days later, an anonymous text message was being randomly circulated: 'at least 17 Denmark newspapers have insulted prophet again /.../ can we use our freedom of expression to announce to at least 10 persons that we love our prophet more than our own life? can u pass this to 10 others?' In addition to the stated intention of borrowing from the 'West's' moral position (blasphemy equals war and drugs, and expressing one's love for the Prophet equals freedom of expression), these unusual ways of voicing discontent also demonstrated how powerful and functional emotions can be in mobilizing support.

### Some words on the methodology

[15] In addition to my personal observation of the Lahore demonstration, as well as press articles and TV programmes, my primary material includes interviews with eight protestors (all male, no women participated in the protest). These were undertaken in May 2007, conducted in Urdu, often as an open discussion and sometime with the people who put me in touch with them. Post-hoc interviews certainly have their limitations: they artificially isolate protestors, while a street protest is first and foremost a collective event. Nonetheless, a subjective reconstruction of one's reasons to join a protest does not mean that only 'biographical illusions' come to the surface. Interviews do allow us to 'identify, in an inductive way, some types of argumentation, some typical *agencements*, some specific configurations of categories' (Claude Dubar quoted in Fillieule 2001: 205).

[16] Informal and acquaintances' networks helped greatly in getting in touch with interviewees. Identifying protestors a year later proved slightly problematic, the exception being the protest's chief organizer and leader of the TNRM, *maulana* Muhammad Sarfaraz Naeemi. In his late 50s, he is a prominent *alim* in the Barelwi tradition and heads the Dar-ul Uloom Jamia Naeemia, a remarkably colourful Barelwi madrasa located in Garhi Shahu, a working-class district nearby Lahore Railway Station. The interview was conducted on its premises where Naeemi receives unannounced visitors all morning<sup>9</sup>.

[17] While the interviewees came from diverse professional backgrounds, ideological preferences, and levels of participation, they all lived in Lahore's popular districts and belonged to the same social milieu, one that can be called - for lack of a better word - the middle-class, a 'residual category' of neither poor nor affluent (Daechsel 2004: 30). All of them were sons of low-rank civil servants, apart from Waqas, a 22-year-old 'street boy' from the Old City (*androon sheher*) who took part in the riot<sup>10</sup>, and Ahmad, a 39-year-old former boxer, born in the Old City as well. A PPP 'socialist activist' in his youth, Ahmad is now a small cadre of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf. He went to the 14<sup>th</sup> February demonstration, somewhat reluctantly, to assert his party's presence.

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<sup>9</sup> Naeemi's biography is detailed in a separate section of this article.

<sup>10</sup> All names have been changed, except for the organizer of the protest. Waqas' biography is also detailed below.

[18] Nadeem, aged 23, went to the protest alone and 'shouted slogans', but left 'when the atmosphere became violent'. He had only participated in a demonstration once against the privatisation of his college. Born in a small Punjabi town and to an Ahl-i-Hadith family, he came to Lahore to study law at the Punjab University. He said to dislike the 'religious parties' although he shared their views. This was not the case of Farhan, described by his friend as a 'typical inflexible Jamaati guy, very committed to the Islamic cause'. On the otherwise bare walls of his bachelor flat hangs a poster on which is printed *maulana* Mawdudi (the founder of the Jamaat-i-Islami, JI)'s famous speech<sup>11</sup>. Aged 31, he also migrated from a Punjabi village to study history at the Punjab University. He is a former member of the JI's student wing, the Islami Jamia-i-Tuleba (IJT), and an experienced protestor. He 'keep[s] on going to demonstrations, anti-America ones, for the Taleban or against the war in Iraq'. He also briefly attended a training camp in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s. His friend Ramzan, a 27-year-old maths teacher, who had studied at a Deobandi madrasa, joined us and briefly described his participation in the demonstration.

[19] Born in Lahore, Hasnan is a 17-year-old student at the Mohammedan Anglo Oriental (MAO) College located on the Lower Mall where the riot happened. His favourite pastime is *naat khawani* (reciting religious hymns in praise of the Prophet) and watching religious channels. He is a regular devotee at a Barelwi mosque in the popular Chauburji district in front of which he leaves. The interview was conducted on its premises and in the presence of its *khatib*, Qari Tausif. Tausif, a 35-year-old Azad Kashmiri, graduated from one of the biggest Barelwi madrasas in Lahore's Old City and is a worker of the Jamiat-ul Ulama-i-Pakistan (JUP, a Barelwi political party formed in 1948). He has participated in many demonstrations under its banner. A portrait of Ahmed Shah Noorani, its recently deceased leader, hangs on the wall of the *hujrah* (a mosque's room where the prayer leader resides), above a cable-connected TV that the *imam* keeps to remain 'informed on current affairs'.

## I. The protestors: From righteous anger to biographies

[20] 'People trust the media and no Muslims want to see these cartoons or feel the need for proof of what they were showing in reality', states Nadeem. Only two demonstrators I

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<sup>11</sup> 'This is the country not of Marx or Mao Ze Tong's *umma* but of Muhammad's *umma*, if we are ready to fight for the sake of Allah's religion, then with the help of Allah, we won't be afraid to open ten fronts'.

interviewed had actually seen the 'cartoons', the others had to rely on the consensual way in which the local media, English- and Urdu-speaking alike, framed the issue: the 'blasphemous' 'cartoons' against Prophet Muhammad, PBUH'. 'It was something that disturbed me emotionally' says Farhan, while Waqas recalls that he 'got angry as soon as [he] heard on TV that they had been rude to our Holy Prophet'. This was the emotional trigger of an outrage, that could not be seen but was strongly felt.

### **Anger, love, and honour**

[21] 'Our cognitive beliefs about how the world is, our moral vision of how the world should be, and our emotional attachment to that world march in close step' (Jasper 1997: 108) in informing our motivation to protest to an event we dislike. If no one comes first, it is precisely because emotions themselves encompass this inter-functionality: they are 'embodied thoughts /.../ seeped with the apprehension that 'I am involved' (Rosaldo 1984: 143). Yet, emotions are not just constructed, calculated, or 'managed' by entrepreneurs and participants alike (Cefaï 2007: 518).

[22] Analyzing affects, at their pre-reflexive level, is certainly the hardest task in understanding their role in collective actions. It is none the less justified, as proven by Hasnan's testimony. After stating that, 'I learnt on TV that some people made caricatures of the Prophet', he immediately put his right hand on his heart and adds: 'May God forgive me but they say they were *caricatures* [stressing the word] ...this provoked a big commotion in Islam and among its people. It's obvious that in our hearts, a great shock arose'. Emotions indeed also 'affirm what they assert': an appraisal grounded in the reality of the body itself (Lynch 1990: 14). As a matter of fact, the emotion that the young protestor tries to describe is a shock related to fear (*halchal*, 'commotion', also means 'panic' in Urdu, and *haul*, 'shock', expresses a sentiment of terror). Even more significantly, this shock is, later on in the interview, compared to 'a lightening bolt that struck the heart of those who love the Prophet'.

[23] 'Look, out of respect, we keep no pictures of the Prophet in our houses or even our minds, how can we possibly allow others to do it?' explains Ahmad angrily<sup>12</sup>. This and, more

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<sup>12</sup> In some popular pictures (especially in Iran), the Prophet can be portrayed with human features (Centlivres 2005). In Pakistan the norm is to represent him through his symbolic attributes alone.

precisely, the mocking intent of the 'cartoons', inform what has been convincingly defined as 'the essential political emotion' (Holmes 2004: 123): anger. 'These caricatures were made on the basis of making fun' adds Hasnan, 'Thank Allah, I didn't see them because I don't know what could have happened...I would have lost it!' For Sarfaraz Naeemi, ridiculing the Prophet was even more infuriating given that 'these caricatures were published after a contest, they offered hundred thousands of dollars to the cartoonists, gave them a guideline and then selected twelve'. Reprinting the drawings in the European press added insult to injury: 'Even after Muslims protested in a lot of countries and told them not to do this, they reprinted the cartoons several times' (Nadeem).

[24] The feeling of anger is born out of what was certainly the most 'managed emotion' (Hochschild 1983) during the mobilization phase and the protest event: love for the Prophet (*ishq-e-rasul*). This certainly does not render the sincerity of its experience and the protestors' religious fervour into secondary motivations. Farhan explains this love as a reflex emotion: 'Muslims keep on being killed all over the world and we stay quiet. But love for the Prophet [pause] is such that we cannot bear anything ridiculing it. There is nothing to be explained, it's not a scientific thing or a contract. It's not that kind of relation: it's a relation of love'. All protestors mentioned it, irrespective of their doctrinal affiliation, or almost agnostic position (the PTI activist). For *maulana* Naeemi, 'Our faith is not complete unless we don't make *ishq-e-rasul* a part of it', while for Hasnan, it is 'the most important quality of a Muslim'. That 'Europe' could not understand its intensity puzzled the interviewees and informed their perception that a conspiracy was at work (see below). The fact that the Danish newspaper addressed its apology to 'Muslims', and not to the 'Prophet' was equally baffling. 'The problem is not us but the personality they made cartoons of', says Farhan, 'suppose I abuse and hurt someone and later say I am sorry but I still maintain that what I've done was my right: what kind of apology is that?'

[25] The apology was understood as not only negating the very meaning of the protestors' love but also as reasserting a moral right to 'abuse': far from appeasing protestors, it increased their anger. Yet anger is not just a feeling, it is 'a judgmental emotion': when being angry, 'you are the judge, and the other person the defendant' (Solomon 1984: 250). This explains why 'talking emotions' was, during the interviews, constantly tied to communicating, and evaluating, one another's moral values. The publication of the 'cartoons' provoked, indeed, what James Jasper terms a 'moral shock', creating 'such a sense of outrage in a person that she

becomes inclined towards political action, with or without the network of personal contacts' (Jasper 1997: 106). Interestingly, he compares it with an electrical shock, a significant reminder of Hasnan's description of his emotional indignation.

[26] This raises two questions. First, what was the texture of the outrage? The answer is not easy, as stressed in the introduction to this special issue. Outrage is first and foremost an act of language, a qualification with a performative dimension. But the word 'outrage' does not exist as such in Urdu (the closest is *mushta'il*, 'to be enraged' after a provocation, or *gham-o-ghuse*, 'sorrow and anger'). As a matter of fact, interviewees used different words to qualify the 'cartoons': a 'blasphemy (*tohin*)' but also 'a faith problem' (*iman ka masla*), a 'disgrace (*behurmati*) to the Prophet's honour (*izzat*)', 'insolence/rudeness (*gustakhi*)' or 'an insult (*be-izzati*)'. Sometimes only periphrases, such as this 'wrongdoing (*ghalti*)' or 'unsuitable action (*nazeba harkat*)'. It was often referred to, in terms of its intentions, as 'a conspiracy' (*sazish*) or something 'aimed at humiliating Islam (*Islam ko nicha dikhana*)'. Finally, it was qualified by its effect: it could not be 'tolerated (*bardasht*)', was highly 'disturbing (*taklifdeh*)' and 'harmed emotions (*jazbat ko majru*)'.

[27] Second, how does a 'moral shock' lead to effective mobilization? Certainly, 'moral shock, agency, and activism have a complex relation' (Goodwin *et al.* 2001: 17). It can also lead to passivity whenever the offended see themselves as victims of forces beyond their control. As a matter of fact, many people in Lahore were equally morally shocked by the 'cartoons' but did not join the protest, thinking that it was 'useless' or because they 'didn't like demonstration'. Thus, recruiting for collective mobilization requires more than shaking people's inner sense of morality. It also has to do with the pleasure that certain individuals, but not others, feel in voicing their moral preferences in a public arena. The anti-'Danish cartoons' protestors were not just outraged; they wanted everyone to know that they occupied the moral high ground. As put by Nadeem, who regularly writes open letter to newspapers on 'world issues', it was a matter of 'talking to the world'.

[28] Bringing participants to a protest also depends on the protest organisers' framing work. The outrage has to be labelled in a way that is locally meaningful, in other words linked to a pre-existing repertoire of public sanctions, as emphasized by Jeanne Favret-Saada (1992: 257). When asked how he discussed the issue during his *khutba* at the mosque, *imam* Tausif replied: 'I informed people that this act was blasphemous and that the punishment for the blasphemer is

death. This is in the Quran'. This was a potent frame in the Pakistani context where the Blasphemy Laws condemn as a crime punishable by the death penalty if related to the Prophet, any 'deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings'.

[29] Most commentators of the 'Danish cartoons' controversy barely envisaged, as was already the case during the 'Rushdie affair', that 'critical religious thoughts might exist among ordinary people - enabling to blaspheme or to accuse of blasphemy' (Favret-Saada 1992: 253). This is surprising because what triggered the wave of protest was precisely qualifying the 'cartoons' as a blasphemy: a quintessential form of outrage that has no intrinsic quality but implies drawing a line between what is tolerable and what is not according to one's religious believes.

[30] The concept of 'honour' was a crucial element in drawing this line, as demonstrated by the very name of the Tahaffuz-e-Namoos-e-Risalat Mahaz: 'Front for the protection of the *honour* of Muhammad's prophecy'. This is how it could convince people that protesting will not only be useful but also truly satisfying, bringing a sense of gratification 'not of achieving a utopia but of striving for one' (Jasper 1997: 135). To the highly literal word '*namoos*'<sup>13</sup>, the interviewees preferred the more commonly used '*izzat*'. This multilingual term defies simple translation: it is 'a whole complex of emotionally charged values including honour, respect, reputation, shame, prestige and status' (Dusenbery 1990: 242). Covering relationships within and between families, as well as social relations and religious attitudes, it invokes a strong sense of personal and collective duty.

[31] Interviewees linked a sense of *izzat* (in its multiple settings) and the need to protest. For Hasnan, it was a religious injunction: 'Once, the Prophet said: 'if it is a matter of your honour, stay silent, but if it's a matter of Islam, my person and my family, go out of your home and ask the offender 'hey you, what's your problem?"; a *hadith* he significantly phrased in the modern 'street language' of honour-based confrontations on Lahore's streets and colleges. For Ahmad, the 'cartoons' could be compared to insulting a family member in the most dishonouring way imaginable: 'Never mind, please, but it is as if someone took pictures of your mother without clothes'.

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<sup>13</sup> This Arabic term also means 'reputation, esteem, dignity' and comes from the word 'to conceal (a secret)'. It clearly refers to what should be hidden (or not talked about) to preserve one's reputation.

[32] Protestors, nonetheless, also displayed moral balance, cautious in evaluating the legitimacy of their reaction by questioning that of their opponent. They discussed with great passion the concept of freedom of speech and, remarkably, through the grid of their own personal experiences and emotional culture. While for Nadeem, the law student, freedom of speech is a hollow 'defence' because it is not unlimited in European countries either, for the Bareilwi *imam*, 'everyone one should have the right of freedom of opinions in any field, but with Prophets and sacred personalities, one should be careful'. Hasnan, the young *naat* singer, conveyed the point through a poetic metaphor ('Man should talk in such a way that flowers come out of his mouth, but its thorns should not wound the other')<sup>14</sup>.

[33] Finally Farhan, influenced by the JI's concept-based ideological training, claims that, 'this concept called tolerance in European countries means that human beings are all equals, even exceptional people such as Prophets. But in Islam tolerance does not exist, sacred personalities are not our equals. Our concepts are not the same'. This striking antiparastasis - what he is accused of (intolerance) is reframed as praiseworthy (it is good to be intolerant)<sup>15</sup> -, demonstrates that judgmental emotions and emotionally charged values are functionally linked to cognitive processes.

### **Attributing blame**

[34] 'How to provoke a worldwide crisis with twelve little drawings?' asks Jeanne Favret-Saada (2007) half-provocatively. Radical imams and agitated authoritarian leaders certainly played a key role in distorting the issue. But the 'twelve little drawings' are far from being insignificant. It would indeed be misleading to posit too strong a distinction between a Muslim emotional crowd on the one hand, and rational, harmlessly funny, Danish cartoonists on the other. Protestors' emotions were very much a reflection of those that motivated the 'cartoons': fear, anger, exasperation, desire to assert a moral superiority, stigmatisation (we can laugh at everything while Muslims are easily manipulated by intolerant and violent preachers). This was palpable in most of the drawings (the Prophet as a terrifying sexist villain, suicide-bombers driven by sexual frustration, etc.).

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<sup>14</sup> A local proverb.

<sup>15</sup> On the usage of this rhetorical figure in social mobilization's process, see Cefai (2007: 505).

[35] Indeed, the power of an insult comes precisely from being 'a divisive call for unanimity' (Bouchet 2005: 273); even when humorous, it simultaneously rigidifies differences and negates the right to be different. Protestors did not miss this dimension. The image of the Prophet with a bomb in his turban is the only one that *maulana* Naeemi remembers a year later: 'they showed the Muslim with a scary face, like a terrorist about to devour someone'. This was a very sensitive representation in the post-9/11 context. The cartoonists wanted to warn people against the deviant usage of Islam for violent aims, but from the receptors' point of view (many of them sharing the same concern), it implied that 'Muslims' in general - their Messenger was pictured, not individuals - were to blame.

[36] For Ahmed, the 'most insulting' image was the Prophet stopping suicide-bombers at heaven's gate: 'The Prophet is standing, a loose woman at his arm, and says 'go, do suicide bombing and you will be rewarded with a *hoor*!''<sup>16</sup> The symbolic violence of the image is not to joke about Islam. Contrary to the common reading of the anti-'Danish cartoons' protest as proving Muslims' inability to laugh about their religion, popular humour is not mistaken about the allegorical dimension of the *hooris* (that the drawing denies)<sup>17</sup>. What hurt was the perceived intention to harm instead of encouraging the believer to think about her/his own weaknesses. This attributed intention was a crucial element in the mechanism of this particular outrage. All the interviewees were absolutely convinced that the 'cartoons' were deliberately drawn to hurt Muslims: it was 'a conspiracy against Islam' by 'them' ('Europe', 'the West', 'America').

[37] This is how 'the righteous anger that puts fire in the belly and iron in the soul' could be placed in a convincing 'frame of injustice' (Gamson 1992: 32), with a proper script and a villain to blame. Farhan explains: 'They say that these cartoons happened just by chance but I don't believe them. It was pre-planned. Publishing them once could have been a mistake but so many countries kept on publishing them again and again' (emphasis added). For Ahmed, the conspiracy takes the shape of the 'very strange foreign policy to 'provoke and punish' that the CIA

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<sup>16</sup> These eternally virgin and celestial female beings, mentioned in the Quran and promised to the 'good Muslims', are obviously an allegory (Chebel 1995: 205).

<sup>17</sup> A Pakistani popular joke goes like this. Two friends die. The first one goes to heaven, the other to hell. The first one is rooming around happily, a *hoori* in one arm and a bottle of whisky in the other. The second friend, languishing in hell, shouts at him one day: 'Hey, at least throw me your bottle of whisky!' But when he catches it and tries to drink it, he cries: 'I cannot drink, there's no hole in this bottle!' The first one replies, pointing at the *hoori*, 'So what? She doesn't have one either!' This joke clearly makes fun of those who practise Islam hoping for material retribution alone.

has introduced against the Muslims: you provoke someone, he reacts and you can punish him'. For *maulana* Naeemi, 'Bush was behind all this, he targets Muslims because he is an extremist Christian', another significant antiparastasis echoed by Hasnan: 'The people who committed this [the cartoons] and disgrace Islam, I call them rebels, extremists actually'.

[38] That the allocation of blame was framed as a 'conspiracy theory' should not be brushed aside as irrelevant or irrational. Conspiracy theories are a key element in the social construction of a protest. This particular 'regimes of justification' helps protestors, when they speak from the 'world of inspiration' (emotions) to the 'civic world' (street protest, for instance) and the 'world of opinion' (the media), to lower the impressions of 'spontaneity' and irrationality attached to their emotional reactions (Boltanski and Thévenot 1991: 19). It acts, as well, as a 'pragmatic constraint' that 'freezes the anxiety' generated by the 'bad intentions' attributed to the other (Thévenot 1995: 150); it rationalizes an intolerable situation (Why would anyone want to hurt me? Why are 'they' so insensitive to our love for our Prophet?). It ensures that the grievance engage a group, hence calling for public recognition (otherwise it would be nothing more than a personal suffering). Finally, it works as a strategy of 'self-aggrandizement' (Boltanski *et al.* 1984: 23), enhancing the status of the victim (How frightening I might be, hence powerful, if such great powers try to hurt me!).

[39] Conspiracy theories alone cannot explain how the protestors were eventually put into an 'attack mode' (Jasper 1997: 106). This was mediated by another widespread and decisive way of reading the situation: Muslims were not only 'attacked' but 'provoked' and 'tested', in their sense of honour ('the cartoonists' wanted to test whether or not Muslims would rise in the name of their Prophet', *imam* Tausif), their resilience ('they published these cartoons just to see if Muslims could bear it, then step by step, they would make bigger insults', *maulana* Naeemi) and in their capacity to resist the spread of European values ('European countries thought that they can tease Muslims as much as they want and Muslims will get used to their notion of tolerance', Farhan). This explains why joining the 14<sup>th</sup> February demonstration was described as a matter of 'emotional commitment' (Farhan): a way to assert that one could take up the challenge and fight back.

[40] Yet again, other people in Lahore, sharing the emotional responses and moral valuations described above, as well as the same conviction that they were 'provoked', did not join the street protest. The question of how a *predisposition* translates into an *effective action*

remains open and can only be addressed by looking at the protestor's unique biography and individual trajectory (Fillieule 2001). This approach is applied here only to the organiser of the Lahore protest: *maulana* Sarfaraz Naeemi. It gives invaluable information about his 'emotional culture' and 'emotional repertoires' (Gould 2002: 178, Goodwin *et al.* 2001: 22).

### **'I defeat those who denigrate the Prophet': Biography and emotional repertoire<sup>18</sup>**

[41] *Maulana* Sarfaraz Naeemi, is not only a professional 'mobilizer' on causes revolving around the 'Prophet's honour' but also the heir of a line of Barelwi *ulama* who transmitted to him a given repertoire of 'outraged protests'<sup>19</sup>. His father, 'Hazrat' Mufti Muhammad Hussein Naeemi (1923-1998), was a renowned *alim* from Muradabad (India) who had studied under the guidance of *maulana* Naeemudin Muradabadi (1887-1948), a *khalifa* (authorized successor) of *maulana* Ahmad Riza Khan himself. Muradabadi, an active campaigner against the Arya Samaj and Christian missionaries in the United Provinces, and in favour of the Khilafat movement and the creation of Pakistan, played an important role in shaping the initial form that Barelwis' mass activism took. After being send by his master to Lahore, Naeemi's father founded the Jamia Naeemia in 1953, and the very same year started to campaign in the anti-Ahmadi movement.

[42] Sarfaraz Naeemi took up the mantle of his father's activist career after he died, albeit being a pro-governmental *alim* as well, part of the wider state's project of 'colonizing Islam' (Malik 1996)<sup>20</sup>. One of the stated, and unusual, objectives of his madrasa, as put in its brochure (and just after its educational purpose), is 'to stop discords (*fitna*) and, according to the needs of time, to organize public actions, hold conferences and processions'. As his father used to do, he mobilized on issues revolving around Muhammad's prophecy. The TNRM's duty, as a matter of fact, goes well beyond the 'Danish cartoons' issue: it was 'set up to ensure that if any threat come from foreign governments and NGO to force the government of Pakistan to change its Islamic laws, we are ready and can prevent the government from bowing down'.

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<sup>18</sup> This is how Ahmed Riza Khan (the founder of the Barelwi movement), at twenty years old, replied when asked to introduce himself to his host (quoted in Metcalf 1982: 300).

<sup>19</sup> His full title is: 'Doctor' *maulana* Muhammad Sarfaraz Naeemi 'Azhari'. He got a PhD in Arabic and Islamiyat from the Punjab University and graduated from al-Azhar University (Egypt). All the following data are based on an interview with him (Lahore, may 2007) and on the prospectus of the *Dar-ul Ulum Jamaa Naeemia*.

<sup>20</sup> He served, like his father, as a member of the state-controlled Council of Islamic Ideology for a while.

[43] This vigilant organization was precisely formed, in 2002, in reaction to President Musharraf's stated intention to reform the Blasphemy Laws. It organized a protest on this issue, the same year, in Lahore, which interestingly, started from Data Sahab Darbar<sup>21</sup> - the same point of departure chosen for the procession against the 'Danish cartoons'. The very name of the Front also attests the transmission of an emotional repertoire of protest: it is borrowed from the 'Tehreek-i-Tahaffuz-i-Namoos-i-Risalat' formed by another Barelwi *imam* (Maulana Kausar Niazi) in February 1989 to lead the protest against *The Satanic Verses*.

[44] Why are issues related to the Prophet's honour so prominent in Naeemi's activist trajectory? The answer lies in a frequently forgotten dimension of social protests: the 'morally valued and compulsory collective /.../ expression of feelings' (Mauss 1969: 277) that they involve. This, which Marcel Mauss compared to a form of language, is a permanent feature of modern social movements where the convergence of emotional attitudes has often less to do 'with the spontaneous encounter of individual emotions, by definition dissimilar', than with the power of 'the socially legitimate emotions that the situation itself prescribes' (Latté 2006:11). In Pakistan, Barelwis in particular are supposed, and expected, to feel strongly about the Prophet (Metcalf 1982: 300-302). Assessing his prominent position and exalting his greatness is at the core of their identity<sup>22</sup>. It is rooted in the belief that the Prophet is 'light' ('His essence was of light but he came to us in human form' recalled *imam* Tausif during the interview), present everywhere, seeing everything, has unique knowledge of the unknown and is the fundamental intercessor at Judgment Day and in day-to-day life matters.

[45] As put by *imam* Tausif again, 'the reason we came out on the road [against the 'Danish cartoons'] was the emotions that any Muslim *should* have had' (emphasis added). Defending Muhammad's prophecy is not just a 'reflex emotion' but also a 'feeling rule', ie. a 'guideline for the assessment of fits and misfits between feeling and situation' (Hochschild 1979: 566). It is one of the rare issues on which Barelwi *ulama* organize, and take the lead, of collective protests, such as the 1953 anti-Ahmadi movement (that they termed the *tehreek khatm-e-*

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<sup>21</sup> Abu Hasan Ali al-Hujwiri, popularly known as Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh ('the giver who bestows treasure') is a Sufi scholar from Ghazna said to have converted the first Hindu to Islam in Lahore, where he died in 1077. His grave is the most popular site of Sufi veneration in the city.

<sup>22</sup> To the extent that, in certain occasions, the motto 'Ya Rasul' ('Oh Prophet!') clearly indicates a person's sympathy for the Barelwi tradition.

*nabuwwat* or 'movement for the finality of Muhammad's prophecy')<sup>23</sup>, the second 'round' of the anti-Ahmadi campaign in 1974<sup>24</sup>, the 1977 anti-Bhutto movement (that they rephrased as the '*nizam-i-mustafa*') and the 1988/89 anti-Rushdie campaign. This is why they were also at the forefront of the February 2006 procession in Lahore: to wash away the stain that the 'Danish cartoons' had spread on the Prophet's 'reputation'.

## II. The 14<sup>th</sup> February protest in Lahore: Staging conflicting emotions

[46] The Lahore protest was preceded by a wave of demonstrations in the country. The first one, and a spontaneous one it seems, was held in Peshawar, in early February 2006, by a group of government college students. The movement then spread to the tribal agencies, Islamabad and Rawalpindi, before coming back to Peshawar where it turned violent on 13<sup>th</sup> February. Yet, the two main organizers of the 14<sup>th</sup> February protest in Lahore - the Qaumi Tajir Ittehad (QTI), the largest association of local traders who announced a complete shutter-down strike, and Maulana Naeemi - expected it to be peaceful. They were proved wrong. The issue at stake was such that, in addition to the JUP, many other political and religious parties joined such as, and critically so, the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD)<sup>25</sup> and both factions of the PML.

### From *communitas* to destruction

[47] The protestors - about 5,000 to 10,000 - formed a heteroclite crowd. Beside traders, shopkeepers and party activists, most were Barelwi madrasa students<sup>26</sup>. There were also a lot of youngsters from the Old City and popular districts - the jeans/bandana clad 'wheely boys' (thus called for their motorbike stunts) or 'the kind of guys who stand in front of college girls' as a friend farcically describes them - along with students from government colleges. Other social groups

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<sup>23</sup> The centre of the agitation was also located in the Wazir Khan's Barelwi mosque (Ahmad 1993: 12).

<sup>24</sup> Although this time the IJT triggered the protest, the resolution stipulating that Ahmadis were a non-Muslim minority, which was subsequently changed into a constitutional amendment, was initially presented in the National Assembly by a Barelwi *alim* and JUP leader (Shah Ahmed Noorani).

<sup>25</sup> The JuD (named as such in December 2001 but formerly known as the Markaz Dawa wal-Irshad or by the name of its armed wing, the Lashkar-i-Tayyeba) was formed in 1986 to send Pakistani Ahl-i-Hadith recruits to fight (in marginal number) in Afghanistan and, after 1990, in Indian Kashmir.

<sup>26</sup> Despite the growing presence of Deobandi and Ahl-i-Hadith madrasas, Lahore remains a Barelwi stronghold. Out of the 356 registered madrasas located in the city in 2002 (30, 000 students), 149 are Barelwi with about 20, 000 students (Shahzad 2002).

were present in pockets such as lawyers, journalists, low-rank civil servants, etc. Some had also come from the city's surrounding villages. The crowd was nevertheless homogeneous in terms of gender (exclusively men) and class: residents from posh areas were almost entirely absent.

[48] Although leaders spent a lot of energy in convincing people that 'it [was] not a political issue' (as put by *maulana* Naeemi), the protest was far from apolitical: slogans invariably blamed the Pakistani government for its inability to 'protect Muslims' and for its alliance 'with the US'. This ambiguity was inscribed in the route of the protest itself. It started from Data Darbar's shrine in the Old City to reach the Punjab Assembly after going through Mall Road (or The Mall). This road is the nerve of the city, linking the Northern Old City to the Southern upper middle-class and elite residential areas, a major shopping centre, a concentration of colleges and universities and the place where most of the government's buildings are located (Secretariat, High Court, Provincial Assembly, Governor's House). The spatial set-up of the demonstration itself was, indeed, part of the many dispositions for the emotional dramaturgy of anger to take place, and a major reason for it getting out of hand as well.

[49] The protestors mainly formed an expressive crowd. There were no expectations that policies will be changed, no material gains to fight for, and no attempts to resolve a given problem. The objective was to 'express our emotions in our actions' (Farhan) and 'to send to the cartoonists the message that for the Muslims it is a very important issue so they'll stop printing these cartoons' (Nadeem). Though there is no reason to infer that the organizers did not share the same sense of indignation, they certainly, and skilfully, mobilized anger. All along the procession route, a symbolic duel was fought between loved and hated characters.

[50] Slogans were raised in praise of the Prophet (such as the conventional *nara-e-risalat* - 'Oh Messenger of God!' - and 'Who has no love for Muhammad, doesn't deserve to live'). 'Villains' were booed: interestingly not so much the cartoonists but 'Denmark', 'the Jews' and the 'Bush-Mush (Musharraf)-Blair' trilogy whose effigies were burnt in the street, hence transforming the issue into a conflict between singular, and more familiar, personalities. This Schmittian narrative was 'no mere cognitive feat but require[d] the mobilization and sustaining of powerful feelings (Ost 2004: 240): the 'outraged community' that had gathered on The Mall was called upon to act as a sanctioning judge in this fight between good and evil and to personify a reclaimed dignity.

[51] The street procession was, indeed, staged as a 'social drama', a 'disharmonic process arising in conflict situations', through which not only 'conflicting groups /.../ attempt to assert their own and deplete their opponents' paradigm', but also reinvest their religious paradigms 'with vitality' (Turner 1974: 35, 37). The crowd was the embodied *umma*; an identity that, far from being an 'artefact', was 'felt, expressed, reinvented, claimed' (Cefaï 2007: 258) and put in presence of itself. As remembered by Hasnan 'I was in the middle of the procession, we were holding each other's hands /.../ we were lost in our love for the Prophet'. Rather than an imagined community, this *umma* was simultaneously represented and engendered as a '*communitas*': an 'undifferentiated, equalitarian, direct, nonrational (though not irrational), I-Thou or Essential We relationships' uniting people 'over and above any formal social bonds' (Turner 1974: 53, 45). And as stressed by Victor Turner, it is precisely in conditions on the peripheries of everyday life, such as a street protest, that the 'wind of existential *communitas*' can better be felt and the *communitas* itself experienced as an 'eternal now' (Turner 1974: 243, 238).

[52] But 'social dramas' are not just about displaying an 'eternal now': they are also 'forcing people to take side in terms of deeply entrenched moral imperatives' (Turner 1974: 35). The 'cartoons' were perceived as a rupture or incoherency in the normative order, a threat to the protestors' intimate beliefs and convictions. Hence, the demonstration was also a matter of moral sanctioning: *imam* Tausif remembered that when he joined it, 'emotions were very high, each party was holding its flag, people were holding banners demanding that the cartoonists apologise to the entire Muslim world and do *toba* [vow not to do it again]'. Truly, protestors 'do not simply or directly try to change what they dislike - which may not be possible -, they also express contempt and outrage over existing practices' (Jasper 1997: 5): it is their ability to provide a moral voice that makes protest activities so satisfying. The Lahori demonstrators could dream that the cartoonists will be 'captured and punished' (according to Hasnan, who yet had no idea of how that could happen) and if that was impossible, at least be made answerable for what they did: 'we took out the processions to tell to the government that 'if you cannot do anything, at least give a call to Denmark and ask 'why did you do this to us?'' (Hasnan).

[53] This fight between a public good and a public wrong, '*mise en forme, en scène et en sens*' (Cefaï 2007: 409), ended up in an uncontrollable anger (and joy) of destroying and looting that turned The Mall into a 'war zone' for six hours. The pattern of violence was similar to many other riots (Janowitz 1979): the rioters first attacked the emblems of public order, and once the

security forces show signs of weakness, they split into small groups, smashing offices and shops, burning motorbikes and cars, looting western fast-foods, shops, offices. When they tried to rob an ATM machine, two rioters were killed by a private guard. One group set on fire the old Diyal Singh Mansion where a Shezan bakery was located, while others attacked the Pakistan International Airlines' office, travel agencies, the Norwegian mobile company Telenor outlets, etc.

[54] The evolution of the targets clearly show a progressive lifting of inhibitions: from breaking traffic signals and pelting stones at a police station to taking a high police official hostage - when he tried to calm the rioters - and beating him up, and finally breaking off the police cordon at the provincial Assembly and set one of its rooms on fire. The Rangers (a paramilitary unit) were called in and stayed in the city for twenty days. Many 'mini-riots' nonetheless continued on the following days, targeting petrol pumps and bakeries in different parts of the city. At the end, 135 protestors were arrested, a hundred buildings were broken and 400 cars and motorcycles damaged (Khan 2006).

[55] Many of the protestors I interviewed were shocked by what seemed to be an 'issueless riot' (Marx 1970), remembered as 'the day Lahore burnt' (as happened in 1947). Farhan, the former IJT activist and an old hand at demonstrations, put the blame, interestingly, on a bad management of emotions:

Usually, groups who organize demonstrations know how to control the crowd when it becomes too emotional. Political and religious workers are trained for that and know how far they can go. But in this protest, people from neighbourhood, the common public, came to express their emotion, they had no leadership, no coordination, *they were not part of any system* (emphasis added).

[56] Truly, when the Barelwi leadership tried to address the crowd, it proved useless. *Imam* Tausif remembers: 'our *ulama* said on the loudspeaker: 'Stop the [rioters], brothers! They're not our people, they're creating chaos!' But no one listened'. But Nadeem gives another picture: 'some people were totally uncontrollable but others were instigating them'. The '*khufia haaf*' (secret hand)<sup>27</sup> was, indeed, the most widespread explanation for the violence, given by the police, the press, political parties and the organizers' alike. There were, certainly, disconcerting

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<sup>27</sup> See the conservative Urdu newspaper *Nawa-e-Waqf*'s coverage on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2006.

facts: violence erupted as soon as the protest started while men carrying guns and law-enforcement officials in civvies were spotted guiding the crowd.

[57] Yet, the crowd was not simply 'imitative', to borrow on the old psychosocial theories: certain acts of violence made sense, such as attacking a Shezan bakery allegedly owned by an Ahmadi, others not. For instance, when a man tried to push the crowd to attack a Christian church, shouting from the top of a roof 'kill the *kuffar* (infidels), burn them!', people looked at him indifferently thinking he was a 'crazy drug addict'<sup>28</sup>. To understand the inner logic of violence, we need to go 'inside' the crowd; 'only in interpretative biographies, in the narrated experience, can we understand the symbolic dimension of violent transgression, of performative acts in need of a public' (Weisbrod 2002: 555).

#### **A rioter's testimony: The street boy and the policemen**

[58] Waqas is 22 years and lives in Rang Mahal, in the heart of the Old City. His participation to the anti-'Danish cartoons' protest was primarily a matter of a peer group's adventure, another form of 'programme' in the colloquial language of Lahore's street boys: 'My friends called and said 'hep, what's up man [*kia programme hai yaar*]?' There's a strike tomorrow on this cartoons thing, let's go". Though quite shy, he laughs constantly when recalling his 'heroic deed' on that day. After the friends came out at Bhatti Gate (one of Walled City's twelve gates), he casually explains: 'Two policemen passed in front of us, we trashed them badly, took our bikes and run away'. When I asked him if they had done something to him, he replied even more casually: 'No, I just felt like it [*dil kar raha tha*]'. His childhood friend adds in the same laughing tone 'He's our Shahrukh Khan'<sup>29</sup>, angry even before meeting his enemy!

[59] But Waqas gives at this point a meaningful precision: 'Yep, it was an old anger. Police fined me a lot of time. First, they accept small bribe, then ask for more and if you don't have the money, they give you a *chalan* [fine]. It's a real pain then, you have to queue at the bank'. After a short silence, he adds: 'So what? Beating up policemen is no big deal, they beat

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<sup>28</sup> Attacking churches is a more common repertoire in the rural periphery of Lahore (such as during the 'Danish cartoons' controversy, when a mob attacked a Christian school and church in Kasur). In Lahore, discrimination and false accusations of 'blasphemy' are more widespread.

<sup>29</sup> Shahrukh Khan is an Indian (Muslim) actor extremely popular in Pakistan and famous for his fits of anger.

people all the time no?' His friend, significantly pursuing on the movie metaphor, adds: 'Him and his brother, they always get a 36 at the lottery!<sup>30</sup> They're the famous *badmash* [goons] of Rang Mahal'. As a matter of fact, when we met, Waqas' elder brother was in jail (he had opened fire in a street fight)...but using a police car to visit his family.

[60] After beating the policemen, Waqas and his friends joined the protest, put on their headbands with the inscription 'Ya Ali Madad' ('Oh Ali help me!')<sup>31</sup> and chanted slogans in praise of the Prophet. When they reached the lower portion of The Mall, they saw 'the police beating up a lot of people, people threw stones at them and the police fired back tear gas'. They then saw other people destroying buildings: 'We got emotional and did it as well, but we didn't start, we just joined. We broke windows, KFC, Telenor signboards, traffic signals but no cars, that we didn't do'. He then describes different groups of rioters:

When we left, we heard that they killed a guard, but it's not us, those were just bandits [*dakoo*]. There were also Jihadis there. But those who started the violence were students, from MAO College and Diyal Singh College. Someone had told them what to do, what to break. I also saw two boys opening straight fire but those were just 'show-offs' [*shokhe larke*]. And those robbing bakeries and food outlets were villagers, daily labourers (added in a despising tone).

[61] Waqas' testimony clearly demonstrates the limit of the 'frustration model' to explain violence; an explanation of the February 2006 riot incidentally favoured by many among Lahore's liberal elite but theoretically flawed, simply because we cannot infer that individuals facing the same objective conditions will react with similar behaviours (a bias present in all structural analysis). Waqas is not part of a *lumpenproletariat* marauding mob: his father is a property dealer, he has his own motorbike and the family recently moved to a well-furnished house in a middle-class locality in the Northeast of the city. Sure, some deprived youngsters used this opportunity to rob any valuable goods they could put their hands on, such as these two unemployed boys who proudly told their friends about their 'successful strikes' during the riot (mobile phone sets lifted from an office) (Mahmood 2006) or the rural migrant who, truly, can ill afford the pastries and hamburgers they tasted on that day.

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<sup>30</sup> A colloquial expression (*chhatis ka akra*), meaning to pick up a fight, used in the Bollywood movies' slang reappropriated by Old City's youngster.

<sup>31</sup> Commonly used by Shias, but sometimes by Sunnis as well (also a typical expression used by the Muslim hero, or villain, in popular movies).

[62] Rather than social class, group belonging matters here. Waqas is what is locally known as a '*lafanga*' ('ruffian'), '*aawara*' (literally 'vagabond') or, in Punjabi and not necessarily in a negative sense, a '*wela jea banda*', which has the double meaning of an 'idle' and 'free guy' (free from any commitment). These diverse 'labels' describe a well-defined category of young men in the city: who easily get into fights and who don't study or work out of choice. Waqas indeed dropped his private school because he 'was not interested in studies' and he does not want to work (although he learnt the skill of crafting jewellery). When mentioning the Pakistani employees who lost their jobs because of the riot's destruction, he dismissively replies: 'That's up to God'. For the '*wela jea banda*', living on his joint family's incomes, those compelled to work are 'losers'. His way of life is to be 'free', have fun with his (exclusively male) peer group, 'play cricket and watch TV', spend a lot of time out in the streets and do motorbikes' stunts.

[63] This does not mean, at all, that Waqas' anger was faked. Raised in the Barelwi tradition, he strongly feels about the 'Danish cartoons' 'insult'. He does not dwell on intricate conspiracy theories, contrary to university students, but says: 'They had been rude to our Holy Prophet, for us he is a God just after God and I got angry. I swear I would kill the guy who's done these cartoons if ever he comes in front of me!' He then takes a fighter's posture and adds 'We can insult their God as well and see how they'll get angry!' In his social universe, where a *gustakh* (a rude person)'s comment leads to an immediate fight, you don't react by breaking diplomatic relations or calling for public apologies: you silence your opponent, even if miles away, by showing your strength ('If Muslims all over the world were united, no one would dare saying anything to them' adds he). To put your enemy down, you certainly don't rely on a corrupt and weak government; it is people's responsibility to fight back by 'destroying' and 'burning'. He explains: 'The government didn't take any action on this. Only the people did something'. When I ask him 'what did the people do?' he replies 'Many things, they broke shops, cars and official buildings, they destroyed foreign companies so that they get out of our country, they burnt effigies of the British Prime Minister'.

[64] His 'idle' life does not mean, either, that Waqas' moral visions are secondary motivations to protest. He is proud to have been, somehow, the voice of the people on this day, accomplishing something that was morally right: 'What happened was right [*sahi tha*], the person who made the cartoon had to be punished'; something the destruction symbolically accomplished. The young man also alluded several times to his need for moral self-improvement.

When his friend described him, for instance, as just 'sleeping all day long, drinking and watching porno movies at night', the young rioter smiled very uncomfortably<sup>32</sup>: he had just explained that opening a madrasa was 'a must' for all 'good Muslims' and that the Dawat-i-Islami (a proselyte Barelwi organization) was rightly 'making people understand that they should offer their prayers'. His moral valuation was also clearly visible in his narrative of legitimate targets during the riots: no Pakistani shops, cars and bikes, only foreign companies and the police. He clearly dissociated himself from the 'robbers' and the 'show off boys' (violent out of greed and vanity). His own violence had a righteous flavour: vengeance, against the offending 'West'...and the local police.

[65] The emotional and moral frames prescribed by any given social interactions are never fully constraining: they are precarious and sometimes they break when experiencing dissonance (Goffman 1974). This happened during the Lahore riot at the time of the first encounter with the police, on the Lower Mall: it displaced the locus and motivations of the demonstrators from a show of love to the Prophet to a 'police and thief' game. The police, totally unprepared and disorganized, was indeed forced to push back rioters, here and there, thus increasing the playful dimension of the violence. More importantly, the police sent mix signals: in some parts of the procession it displayed empathy, chanting slogans with the crowd, in others it used repression. This contradiction mirrored that of Waqas' day-to-day interactions with a police that arrests his own brother but acts like any other criminal group (a widespread perception, and reality, in Pakistan) when bribing him<sup>33</sup>. In his view, attacking the two policemen was, somehow, part of a natural justice.

[66] The second important situational dissonance that Waqas underlines is the inner conflicts within the crowd: first, the presence of Jihadist militants. Truly, the TNRM was immediately engaged in an 'emotional warfare' (Goodwin et al. 2004: 417) with rival doctrinal groups, whose very presence was felt as a provocation. *Imam* Tausif recalls: 'A group of people from the JuD tried to join us but our [Barelwi] *ulama* asked them to put down their flags, they refused and we had an argument with them'. One of the chief organizers is even convinced that the staunchly anti-Barelwi JuD was told by the Punjab government to start the destructions on The Mall – a street where Jihadist groups organized, all along the 1990s, many protests – in

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<sup>32</sup> An uneasiness increased, of course, by the fact that the interviewer was a woman.

<sup>33</sup> Being bribed by the police is a very common experience for young middle-class Lahoris using motorbikes. It reached such proportion and public anger that the Punjab Government was recently compelled to replace the entire force by a new 'traffic police', graduated and highly paid.

order to defame the Barelwi-initiated procession. The competition between diverse Islamic groups for the monopoly to express the 'inner essence' of Muslims in Pakistan is fought not only from the mosques and madrasas' compounds but, increasingly, on a wider public arena, such as TV channels and, importantly, the streets of Pakistan's main cities. This is the main locus where the various religious sects struggle for public visibility and, as much as Muslims and Hindus used to do in colonial times, 're-negotiate their relationship (among themselves and with the state)' (Freitag 1989: xii).

[67] In the context of Pakistan's religious sectarianism, this is particularly important, especially in Punjab where Barelwism has, historically, its core of supporters<sup>34</sup>. Barelwi *ulama* had always been at the centre of sectarian controversies as they were, at their inception 'an oppositional group as much as they were reformers, not even - as one might think - representing a continuity with the past but rather, in their very self-consciousness, representing a departure from it' (Metcalf 1982: 296). Yet, and as a result of General Zia (1977-88)'s pro-Deobandi and Ahl-i-Hadith inclinations and of the mushrooming of Jihadists groups from these two traditions, Barelwi *ulama* were progressively put on the defensive. Polemics became more intense and increasingly opposed them to the state<sup>35</sup>, as well to new Jihadist organization such as the Ahl-i-Hadith JuD, one of the most active in trying to convert the Barelwi-inclined section of the Pakistani society (a majority) to its Wahhabi-oriented school of thought (a small minority).

[68] The presence of Jihadist groups was not the only one to foster unconventional emotions or 'outlaw emotions' (Jaggar 1989: 161). As Waqas recalls, 'college boys started the violence'; a point made by other interviewees as well. When a group of college students tried to remove a picture of President Musharraf and Chaudhry Elahi (the PML-Q Punjab Chief Minister) on the Lower Mall, they were baton-charged by the police and attacked, in return, a police station. The wider context of students' politics in Lahore sheds light on this incident. Though banned, student unions survived as the youth arms of Pakistan's political parties<sup>36</sup>. Their rivalries since the

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<sup>34</sup> 73% of the Barelwi madrasas' graduates are coming from Punjab (Malik 1996: 244).

<sup>35</sup> In 1978 for instance, the Awqaf Department forbade its employees to say *durud* (request for mercy upon the Prophet and praise) before the *azan* (call for prayer), a decision Barelwi *ulama* eventually fought in court.

<sup>36</sup> The ban, enforced in 1984, was lifted in March 2008 only.

late 1980s had been extremely violent in government colleges and universities<sup>37</sup>, particularly so in MAO, Diyal Singh and Islamiya colleges where the 'college boys' of the 14<sup>th</sup> February protest were coming from. A plausible explanation is that the violence erupted as a result of an internal 'PML campus war': MSF-N (Muslim Student Front-Nawaz Sharif) partisans might have broken the pictures of the PML-Q Chief Minister and of Musharraf nearby the police station, while MSF-Q activists burnt the room of the Opposition leaders (a slot then occupied by PPP and PML-N politicians) in the Punjab Assembly - the only one attacked in the building.

[69] Waqas' testimony therefore shows that the Lahore riot formed a part of larger incidences of everyday violence, occurring in a wide range of social and political contexts (family, colleges, streets, etc.). But the way he recalls it also reveals that another positive emotion was at play: fun, this 'array of ad hoc, nonroutine, and joyful conducts where individuals break free temporarily from the disciplined constraints of daily life, normative obligations, and organized power' (Bayet 2007: 1). The festive mood of the rioters actually struck me. As an observer put it 'Look at them! Running with their McDo burgers, chased by the police, it is like a game'. This quest for fun, a crucial dimension of urban violence in Pakistan, does not, however, results from 'a lack of other opportunities for leisure /.../ an explanation of political mobilization in terms of boredom and, ultimately, unemployment – /.../ that is popular in the right-wing press and the established elite' (Verkaaik 2004: 185).

[70] The enjoyment in transgressing rules, as shown by Oskar Verkaaik in his study of the Muhajir Qaumi Movement's collective actions, is primarily that of reversing socially ascribed roles. This had at least four expressions during the anti-'Danish cartoons' riot: 1/ to ridicule humiliating policemen in a publicly displayed *jugat*<sup>38</sup>; 2/ to frighten the 'affluent' by breaking their symbols of consumerism; 3/ to disobey the elders (parents, generally unaware of their kids' participation to the protest, but also religious leaders unable to control the crowd); 4/ and to literally enter into the politics' reserved domain, the Punjab Assembly. The crowd acted as a

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<sup>37</sup> When the Muslim Students Federation (PLM)-IJT (JI) alliance broke in the early 1990s, for instance, the two unions started jostling with each for campus influence (IJT won in Islamiya College while the MSF dominated MAO College, to be replaced in 2000, and after a fierce struggle, by the splinter pro-Musharraf MSF-Q). In 1984-2004, 165 students were killed in 525 violent incidents in Lahore, against 13 students in 151 incidents in 1947-1984 (Khan 2008).

<sup>38</sup> Literally 'witticism' or 'joke', *jugat* is a favourite pastime in Lahore, almost an art that one masters, wherein members of male peer groups throw humiliating, yet highly imaginative, insults at each other to test the other's resistance.

'leveler' (Tambiah 1996: 278), sharing a sense of taking righteous action not just against the 'outraging West' but also to level down the society's hierarchy.

### **The local *imaginaires* of riots**

[71] One piece is nevertheless missing in the travel inside the dynamics of the crowd that Waqas' testimony provided. When at the very beginning of the interview, he said 'I swear I would kill the guy who's drawn these cartoons if ever he comes in front of me!' he immediately added 'I'll kill him at once like Ghazi Ilamdin Shahid did'. This allusion is quite fascinating because it not only refers to one of the first communal riots in Lahore but also was a dispute over printed words and the application of the blasphemy law in pre-partition time. Waqas explains:

Sometime ago, Ghazi Ilamdin Shahid killed a guy who had published a book against Islam but the British government had him hanged. He was a resident from my neighbourhood, Rang Mahal, there is a Ghazi Ilamdin Chowk (square) a minute away from my home, many places are named after him, clinics, schools, etc. each kid knows about him.

[72] Indeed, in 1927, the colonial courts arrested a Hindu man who had published a book (*Rangila Rasul*, 'The Merry Messenger of God'), found to be prone to provoke enmity between Hindus and Muslims<sup>39</sup>. After his release from prison two years later, the publisher was stabbed to death by a young Muslim, Ilam Din. The Lahore High Court sentenced Din to be hanged. Huge demonstrations erupted and British officials were eventually forced to return his body to his family. Ilam Din received a hero burial and was given the honorific title of *ghazi* ('victorious') and *shahid* ('martyr') by the Muslim notables of Rang Mahal. Hence, and although participants often described the rioters as 'teenagers who watched too much Indian movies and wanted to be hero' (as put by Ramzan), the quest for heroism proves much more complex. It needs to be contextualized at the light of the rioters' local *imaginaires* of violence – an *imaginaire* kept alive and meaningful by the other riots that had happened in the city since the late 1920s.

[73] The pattern of riots in Lahore from the late 1920s till today<sup>40</sup> demonstrates the progressive domination of a vocabulary of protest revolving not on socio-political conflicts

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<sup>39</sup> For details on this issue, see Ahmed (2004: 102-103).

<sup>40</sup> Given the lack of academic work, this chronology is tentative. I am very grateful to Professor Tahir Kamran (GCU, Lahore) and to Shohaib Hashmi for helping me with this.

anymore but on competing religious selves. One of the first riots in pre-Partition Lahore was precisely the one Waqas alluded to. The next agitation, in 1935, also took place in the Old City but this time over the 'Shahidganj Masjid'; a dispute over a sacred site (revered by both Muslims and Sikhs) which contributed to 'dramatize /.../ the emotional power and political importance of Islamic symbols' in Punjabi politics' (Gilmartin 1988: 100)<sup>41</sup>. The second major wave of riots happened during the dreadful 1947 'communal war of succession' (Talbot 2006: 44) which was, also, particularly intense in the areas from which the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2006 protestors were coming from (Walled City, Krishan Nagar, Sant Nagar, Shah Almi, Gawalmandi, Anarkali) and in The Mall - were Hindus and Sikhs owned most of the shops and buildings (such as the Diyal Singh Mansion which was burnt down during the 2006 protest).

[74] In post-Partition Lahore, riots continued to centre on a public assertion of 'Muslim-ness'. This was the case of the 1952-53 anti-Ahmadi campaign, which soon turned, like the anti-'Danish cartoons' riots, into an anti-upper class riot<sup>42</sup> and compelled the Army similarly to step in. In 1977, riots erupted again in the Old City during the *nizam-i-mustafa* movement, which became a popular protest, attracting lower middle-class shopkeepers and madrasa students after the police fired at a crowd at the Muslim Masjid in Lohari Gate. From the late 1970s onwards, as 'Muslim-ness' came to be differently defined by the Pakistani state (see below), riots centred on international and sectarian issues. In November 1979, when false rumour spread that the United States and Israel had seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca, a mob set Lahore's American Cultural on fire. In 1992, as a counter-reaction to the Babri Masjid destruction in India, crowds attacked Hindu and Jain temples in the Old City. Riots then erupted out of the wave of sectarian killings: in 1997 (after the leader of the Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan was killed in a bomb explosion at the Lahore Court) and in 1998 (after the Mominpura Shia graveyard's massacre planned by a SSP splinter group). Then came the anti-'Danish cartoons' riots.

[75] Other forms of social protests do happen in Lahore. Actually, more or less organized and small demonstrations over socio-economic issues, such as power outage, occur on a daily basis and sometimes turn violent. But large-scale riots, involving different sectors of the society -

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<sup>41</sup> After the Sikhs were granted control by the colonial authorities (and demolished the remnants of the mosque), 2000 people massed at the entrance of Landa Bazaar and put the police station under siege. 12 of them died. Bareilwi *ulama* issued fatwas stating that those who had not joined the agitation could not receive Islamic funerals. See Gilmartin (1988: 99-107).

<sup>42</sup> But a much bloodier one as 300 people died (Government of Punjab 1954: 35).

the youth, shopkeepers, madrasa students, middle-class clerks, political parties activists, etc. - mainly revolve around identity-based emotional politics. Although these riots are often used as derivative to partisan objectives<sup>43</sup>, we still have to explain why in most instances they look like 'trials of status' or 'moral crusades'<sup>44</sup>.

### III. The Pakistani state's politics of emotions

[76] As shown by the quoted interviews, and Waqas' one in particular, 'moral outrage /.../ are related to moral intuitions, felt obligations and rights /.../ all of which are culturally and historically situated variables' (Goodwin et al. 2001: 13). This implies that the role of emotions in collective protests cannot be fully understood without moving away from its micro-level expressions, and looking at the 'emotional-institutional context within which social movements do their emotion work' (Flam 2005: 19). The way the state emotionalizes, and consequently depoliticizes, the public sphere is, indeed, hard to ignore in South Asian countries, where riots often take the shape of 'moral crusades' precisely, and where the post-colonial state inherited a politics of social control precisely based on the assumption of the 'emotional subject'.

#### The 'politics of self-expression'

[77] Why did the Pakistani government authorize the anti-'Danish cartoons' protests? Was this, as many times before, a way of 'cultivating the religious lobby', a maneuver used by 'the military-bureaucratic state /.../ in its search for legitimacy' (Jalal 2001: 572)? Certainly. But there is much more to identity politics in Pakistan than this top-down instrumentalist approach suggests. Tambiah (1996: 322) assesses that riots in Pakistan can not be seen as 'popular expressions of a moral economy grounded in a broad consensus spelled out by the authority of the nation-state' because 'the environment lacks a crystallized and coherent nation-state ideology and a body of political norms and practices deriving from it and shared by all'. By looking for a (ever elusive) broad consensus, he misses a crucial point: state's norms and practices matter in order to understand why certain causes and certain emotional repertoire make sense or not.

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<sup>43</sup> Factional infightings within the PML, for instance, also played a crucial role during the 1953 riots.

<sup>44</sup> Both concepts were coined to describe the activism of the American anti-alcohol league fighting to embody the 'good americanity'. See Gusfield (1986).

[78] The gradual consolidation, and state's sponsorship, of what Markus Daechsel forcefully conceptualizes as the 'politics of self-expression', proved determinant in focusing the public debate over a conception of individuals as 'inward-looking and self-contained subjects whose sole purpose was the self-expression of their inner essences' (Daechsel 2006: 1-2). Actually, this peculiar politics truly comes to life in disputes over sacred places or offensive publications fought in the street, as noted by Daechsel (2006: 70)<sup>45</sup>. This is when, and where, the feeling of power of an eternal 'we' can be combined with a feeling of authenticity; this very authentic Muslim-ness that claimed for recognition by an imaginary audience during the anti-'Danish cartoons' riot, and that the Musharraf's government was accused of being unable to protect.

[79] This peculiar political culture, formed in 1930s-50s Urdu-speaking groups, was particularly pervasive among the Lahori middle class milieu; a group occupying a middle-ground position, lower to the established elite but above the labouring proletariat and, as said, a major actor during the anti-'Danish cartoons' protest. Along with much more radical political activists, the founding father of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah himself (who used to say 'Islam really means action'), but also the early Muslim League ideologues, particularly in their students wing (MSF) and the Urdu conservative press - two critical transmitters of the 'Danish cartoons' outrage - played, historically, a crucial role. They popularised a political culture obsessed with abstract wars and identities, revolving around symbolic matters and meant to 'stimulate an affective emotional state of empowerment' (Daechsel 2006: 57). They also shaped the vision of Pakistan as a meta-historical collective whose Muslim inhabitants' right to exist is constantly threatened in a universe of perpetual warfare and conspiracies.

[80] This finds strong echoes in the February 2006 protestors' systems of opposition, their paranoid grid of worldwide conspiracies, and their conviction that the 'cartoonists' had to be 'captured' or physically destroyed, as they were *essentially* not reformable. Inheritors of a deep and enduring legacy of self-expressionism, the protestors 'certain that they knew the substance of morality, could overlook the process of morality: the discourse, life passages, innovation, and learning by which we can continually interrogate ourselves about our moral sensibilities' (Jasper 1997: 365).

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<sup>45</sup> In Lahore, its first manifestations into the public arena were precisely the Shahidganj issue and the anti-Ahmadis disturbances.

[81] Daechsel (2006: 202-210) notes that the politics of self-expression receded in the 1960s, re-emerged during Zia's rule (1977-88), to decline again till the recent apparition of the media-obsessed cult of terrorism and suicide missions; an ultimate extensions of the old self-expressionism (the body itself *is* politics). In my opinion, this political culture on the contrary progressively consolidated; a process which, as matter of fact, explains why the martyr phenomenon in Pakistan is far from being an outcome of the 'war on terror' alone. More to the point, the Lahore riot clearly proved how symbolic wars opposing individuals' essence and 'meta-historical collectivities' continue to be a much more appealing idiom of protest for middle-class milieu<sup>46</sup> than socio-economic issues, or even interests-based politics.

[82] General Zia, truly, proved dramatically important in ensuring the longevity of the process. His Islamization programme meant, basically, that 'debates about democracy, economy, education, culture, women's issues, human rights' issues as well as the functioning of bureaucracy, judiciary and army drew heavily on the divine sources of morality, authenticity and accountability' (Waseem 2007: 153). 'Islamizing' the legal and educational systems, and army's lower ranks, was precisely, as well, a strategic use of self-expressionism so as to curb the political empowerment of the marginalized social groups that Ali Bhutto had, to a certain extent but for the first time, facilitated in the previous decade. Indeed, one of the strongest effects of the politics of self-expression is to impede a politically conscious urban middle class to emerge. This mainstream 'anti-societal form of politics' cannot provide a type of collective identity that can be a basis for class action because it precisely denigrates the local, the immediate, ignores or denounces as petty and distractive 'the stuff of every-day life - how people cooperate and struggle with each other, how they exchange goods and values, how they exercise and resist power' (Daechsel 2006: 1).

[83] Finally, and as importantly for the remit of this article, as it is in this peculiar 'emotional-institutional context' that social movements did their 'emotion work' during the anti-'Danish cartoons' protest: Zia did not just rely on the colonial legacy of the 'emotional subjects' entrusted in the Blasphemy Laws, but exacerbated it. Kept in India and Bangladesh as well, these

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<sup>46</sup> With the brief exception of the 2007 lawyers movement which, nonetheless, failed to mobilize outside its professional ranks.

laws took a peculiar turn in Pakistan<sup>47</sup>. Zia altered them to expel Ahmadis even further from 'Muslim-ness', introducing more strident rules against them in 1984. He then introduced the most controversial article 295-C in 1986, which dramatically shifted the institutionalised 'rules of emotions' by authorizing the state to kill its 'unauthentic' subject in wider and even more ambiguous situations<sup>48</sup>. This is a critical point for our understanding of the anti-'Danish Cartoons' protest. First, because 82% of the victims of the Blasphemy Laws (and in majority Muslims) live in Punjab, especially in the northern districts and lower middle-class areas of Lahore where false accusations of blasphemy have become a lethal instrument in social and economical conflicts (NCJP 2007: 60-83).

[84] Secondly, and if nothing else, these laws made labelling the 'cartoons' as 'blasphemous' legally acceptable, and politically legitimate, empowering the National Assembly to unanimously ban them, compelling the government to allow the protests and, leading the Supreme Court to order (April 2006), the unrealistic yet significant registration of a blasphemy case against the cartoonists, foreign newspapers' owners and... the chairman of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (who had failed to block websites showing the cartoons!). Thirdly, the historical affinity between these laws and anti-Ahmadism also elucidates why rioters selected their targets in 'a repertory of traditional punishment' (Zemon Davis 1973: 81): setting on fire a bakery after rumours spread that it was owned by an Ahmadi<sup>49</sup> but ignoring calls to attack churches.

[85] Not a single government has been able to remove this critical instrument of the state's politics of emotions. Musharraf attempted but failed. The main reason is that, like his military predecessor, he relied on de-ideologizing politics to sustain his rule and allied with the best gatekeeper of self-expressionism: the Punjab-based PML. This party, dominant in Lahori politics<sup>50</sup> and an important actor in the anti-'Danish cartoons' protest, is the main spokesman of

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<sup>47</sup> Blasphemy is defined in Pakistan's Penal Code (a slightly revised version of the 1860 colonial code) as 'injuring or defiling place of worship, with intent to insult the religion of any class of persons' (art. 295) and 'the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any person' by 'word', 'sound' or 'gesture' or any 'object in the sight of that person' (art. 298).

<sup>48</sup> This article states that 'whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation, or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy prophet Muhammad (PBUH) shall be punished with death, or imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine'.

<sup>49</sup> On fire as a 'pure event', an impersonal or agency-less force of destruction, see Thomas Blom Hansen's article in this volume.

<sup>50</sup> Lahore was, at the time of the anti-'Danish cartoons' protest, a quasi-monopoly of the two PML factions.

anti-societal politics in Pakistan (even more so than the Islamist parties); a legacy of initially shaping its political program in opposition to the Hindu-dominated Congress, and then to the consociational model of the pre-partition Unionist Party in Punjab. It has nothing to say about Pakistani society, except that its 'Muslim' families should avoid 'obscene entertainment' (basically any activity where the control over women's body is at stake). It also supported, for instance, a bill to make death as a mandatory punishment for blasphemy in 1992, tried to impose a Sharia Bill in 1998 and when it talks about citizenship, it is to protect Pakistanis' 'inner essence', as proven by its stand over the 'religious column' in the National Identity Cards and Passports<sup>51</sup>.

### **The middle-class youth, body politics and agency**

[86] Certainly, at a personal level 'Muslims in Pakistan have not been passive recipients of attempts by state authority to define and institute an Islamic order' (Kurin 1993: 179). Yet, at a collective level, a certain 'moral universe has emerged in which the state is no longer neutral in its dealing with its citizens' (Talbot 2005: 163); a process which had a deep impact on the youth's political socialization. Indeed, official school textbooks and the medias (public and private)<sup>52</sup> played an important role in disseminating self-expressionism in mainstream politics and in promoting an objectification of Islam revolving around the central thematic of 'Muslims in danger'.

[87] The corollary 'other' of this dynamic witnessed important changes since the 1980s. Internally, the Shia minority (15-20% of the population) was progressively added to the Ahmadi 'unauthentic' other<sup>53</sup>. Externally, 'the West' joined the Indian/Hindu as the main 'emotional other against which the country defined itself' (Metcalf 2004: 230) when Bhutto and Zia, for very practical reasons, reframed Pakistan as a 'Middle Eastern state' linked to the 'Muslim umma' (an its rich

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<sup>51</sup> The mention of religion in the Passport basically targeted the Ahmadis to prevent them of going on pilgrimage in Mecca. In 1992, Nawaz Sharif decided that the National Identity Card should also mention its holder's religion (a decision cancelled after protests from the civil society). In 2005, the Punjabi hard-core component of the PML-Q mobilized against Musharraf's decision to remove the 'religious column' from the new machine-readable passports. The column was restored.

<sup>52</sup> On the private channel GEO TV for instance, the anchor of the religious program *Alim Online* (a former Federal minister for Religious affairs) declared in September 2008 the murder of Ahmadis to be compulsory. Two days later, two Ahmadis (a doctor and a rice trader) were assassinated in Punjab and Sindh.

<sup>53</sup> See on this Nosheen Ali's article in this volume.

funders). Nothing exemplifies this better than the recent slogan cheerfully chanted by the young audience at the Indo-Pakistan Wagah Border ceremony, 'Allah superpower!'

[88] If the youthfulness of the participants to the February 2006 protest is not surprising given the country's demographic trend<sup>54</sup>, the picture is actually more complex. The Pakistani youth's street politics is characterized by a striking schism: while the well-off youth mobilized against the November 2007 state of emergency for instance, it was conspicuous by its absence in the anti-'Danish cartoons' protest that the middle-class youth, on the contrary, enjoyed, and in a way, took over during the riot. This group of youngsters is, indeed, historically much more receptive to self-expressionism, which give 'them a chance of not having to 'get real' in the restrictive sense that their parents and social power holders demanded' (Daechsel 2006: 35). The notion of 'middle-class' is certainly problematic. It is understood here not in a meta-sociological sense or as conscience-based group but as a 'milieu', a class of readers and consumers (Daechsel 2006: 10-15) and, also, a group whose social mobility depends on education, emigration and, more than anything else, on 'mastering the art of wheeling-dealing /.../ learning to give and take bribes, mobilizing friends and relatives' influence /.../ to access to governmental authority' (Qadeer 1983: 171). The anti-'Danish cartoons' demonstrators and rioters were all coming from areas where, without mastering this 'art', no public services can be obtained.

[89] The separation which existed in Lahore during colonial times between the European city (The Mall and the Civil Lines) and the indigenenous cities (the Walled City and Model Town) has been replaced by a division between a popular North and a westernized elitist South<sup>55</sup>. The Mall, where the anti-'Danish cartoons' protest turned into a riot, operates, in this regard, as a crucial socio-physical marker. Significantly, in the Southern posh districts, a *grande peur* type of rumour soon spread on the riot's day ('wheely boys and bearded men are coming with sticks, shut down your shops and run!'). The Mall is also one of the rare streets where the elite's lifestyles somehow fuses with the more traditional ones characteristic of the Old City. With its Pizza Hut, Mac Do and foreign banks, yet conservative traders and shopkeepers, it is the place where the 'cultural war' so much feared by Farhan is fought. In a highly irritated tone, he told me:

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<sup>54</sup> The 18-30 years old are one-quarter of the country's population. In Lahore alone, the 15-25 years old male population is about 20%.

<sup>55</sup> This has to be slightly nuanced: Lahore's neighborhoods do not constitute spatial monopolies (with the major exception of Defence, a newly developed area on army lands) and there are some popular disticts in the South as well.

These cartoons are part of a cultural war against Muslims. Do you really think that these multinational companies are here just to make profit? No, their slogans are not valueless: 'Enjoy the dirt' says the ad of *Surf Excel* or 'if you feel like it, ask for more', that's the *Pepsi* one I think. But no! You don't just do what you feel like, and you don't enjoy getting dirty, in a Muslim society!

[90] Self-expressionism, indeed, has a complex relationship with consumerism and its process of 'demarcating the middle-class body' (Daechsel 2006: 94) that Western companies' advertisements now foster. As the Rexona deodorant ad' recently popularised in the country, the youth is summoned to be either '*cool*', if westernised and smelling good, or '*fazul*' ('useless'), read unable to buy such a commodity (the ad' also alludes, visually, to the widespread stereotype regarding the 'bad smell' of the 'lower' working class). At a symbolic level, the 14<sup>th</sup> February riot can be seen as a revolt against this imposed demarcation: riots are 'inseparably accompanied by the personal appropriation and incorporation of the 'enemy's status' (Tambiah 1996: 215). Going to fast-foods, buying western cloth, having an ATM card - all symbols that the rioters destroyed - were precisely indicators of the new patterns of consumption that the city's enriched middle-class, who managed to pass on the other side of the divide, has experienced in the last decade.

[91] But the middle-class young rioters did more than destroying social boundaries on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2006: they also asserted a sense of agency. They forced the entry of their 'subaltern' street culture into the public and political arena; a culture informed by peer groups' 'programmes', street fights, playing police and thief games, doing motorbike stunts 'to frighten the bourgeois' (as the French expression goes) and assert masculinity, something usually done in the posh districts at night and all over the city on Independence Day. This is attested not only by Waqas' testimony but also by the very presence in the crowd of many young men carrying organization's flags and shouting, going up and down on their motorbike and performing stunts. Indeed, as much as patriotic celebrations do, the 'cartoons' protest, as it revolved around the 'Prophet's honour', gave a legitimate opportunity to convey something else about oneself, not just Muslim-ness, and of finding joy and pride in it.

[92] Because anger 'normally constitutes the prerogative of the powerful, social movements have to re-appropriate the right to feel and display this particular emotions by their members' (Flam 2005: 19-20). This political emotion *par excellence* is a 'subversive emotion': in an aggressive but unmistakable manner, the 'subaltern' youth claimed its right to be publicly angry,

against the 'outraging West' and its 'cultural war', against the local affluent and the police, and also against the political limbo it lives in. If the middle-class youth is sensitive to the self-expressionist sirens' songs, it is certainly not short of class-based grievances: it just has no channels to voice them. As Farhan said about the rioters, 'they were part of no system'.

[93] This is, indeed, a urban generation who is much less politically integrated in the traditional *biraderi* (kinship) system that its elders, had experienced seven years of military rule, violent students politics and police's abuses, who looks at voting as a 'totally useless thing' (as Waqas put it) and politics as 'a corrupt business', and who does not participate in any citizens associations (usually led by the well-off sectors of the society). All the young protestors I interviewed mentioned it: 'the people' had to react to the 'Danish cartoons' because the government failed to protect 'the Muslims'; to represent them, in other words.

[94] After all, a street protest is not any kind of crowd:

Even when its objective is not clearly defined, it fights against decisions perceived as illegitimate or against symbols of oppression and pretends to incarnate the popular will; it can be playful or ferocious /.../ but it is always oriented towards finalities of power, truth, freedom or justice (Cefaï 2007: 74).

## Conclusion

[95] Social protests, and even riots, are events which insistute a public arena: actors accomplish symbolic performances, enact emotions, claim moral preferences, reaffirm collective identities, and dramatize conflicts between distinct social groups. 'Outraged communities', as shown by the February 2006 anti-'Danish cartoons' protest in Lahore, are a wonderful case-study to reveal these often disregarded moral and emotional dimensions of collective actions, except some extremely stimulating works (Jasper 1997, Cefaï 2007, among others). This is particularly worth studying in the Pakistani context wherein the public expression of emotions has become, with time, a matter of harsh controversies and the language in which the boundaries between rival sects are commonly drawn (Blom forthcoming).

[96] Although 'outraged communities' dream themselves as eternal *communitas*, they are shaped *in situ*, on meaningful cause to fight for, in individual trajectories, at particular locations, informed by tensions experienced in the everyday existence and local *imaginaires* of outrage. They also appear at specific historical junctures: the accumulated layers of state-sponsored 'self-

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expressionism', and particularly so in Punjab, proved very functional in emotionalizing and depoliticizing the restive middle-class, as well as in safeguarding the military and PML rules.

[97] Ibn-e Insha has vividly described this process in his satire of Pakistani math textbooks: I am a Muslim; you are not a Muslim. This process is known as division by subtraction. /.../ Ordinary people do not like the rules of subtraction, because they get no sum total from that which is taken away (Ibn-e Insha 2001: 100). The late and great Pakistani humourist probably had in mind the horrors of the 1947 partition and the 1950s violence against the Ahmadis. Fifty years later, 'ordinary people' still 'do not get anything' but do find the ephemeral and destructive, but nonetheless pleasurable, feeling of re-appropriating politics in a familiar form, through the language of religion, emotion and pride that makes it immediately meaningful.

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