Digitality with Ressentiment

Max Scheler in Sociotechnical Societies

Samir Passi

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Research Supervisor

Dr. Jan de Roder

Cultures of Arts, Science and Technology (CAST) is a 2-year research masters (MSc.) in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Maastricht University, The Netherlands (URL: http://www.fdcw.org/castresearchmaster/)

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I

Acknowledgements

Often the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This thesis is an embodiment of this proverb. The 'table of contents' orders this research and delineates clear cut parts which combine to make a complete narrative. The quotes, references, and even the characters on every page of this thesis capture the amount of research that went into making this whole; however, they still fail to demonstrate the influence and contribution of all the people that have been a part of this research. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people that have helped me in the two years of CAST and who have made this thesis possible.

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II

List of Abbreviations

(In alphabetical order)

9-11	September 11, 2001
CDA	*Christen-Democratisch Appèl* (Christian Democratic Appeal)
CU	*ChristenUnie* (Christian Union)
D66	*Democraten 66* (Democrats 66)
DPK	*Democratisch Politiek Keerpunt* (Democratic Political Turning Point)
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HTML	Hyper Text Markup Language
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IWS	Internet World Stats
LFF	*Lijst Vijf Fortuyn* (List Five Fortuyn)
LPF	*Lijst Pim Fortuyn* (Pim Fortuyn List)
MoEAAI	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation
MoECS	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoHWS	Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NIS	Netherlands Info Services
PvdA	*Partij van de Arbeid* (Labour Party)
PVN	*Partij voor Nederland* (Party for the Netherland)
PVV	*Partij voor de Vrijheid* (Party for Freedom)
RNW	Radio Netherlands Worldwide
SP	*Socialistische Partij* (Socialist Party)
STS	Science and Technology Studies
ToN	*Trots op Nederland* (Proud of the Netherlands)
VAA	Vote Advice Applications
VVD	*Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie* (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy)
WBF	Wiardi Beckman Foundation
WRR	*Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid* (Scientific Council for Government Policy)

III

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Introduction: Netherlands' turn to the Right-wing

> "Islam is a totalitarian ideology […] Islam is not compatible with our Western way of life. Islam is a threat to our values. Respect for people who think otherwise, the equality of men and women, the equality of homosexuals and heterosexuals, respect for Christians, Jews, unbelievers and apostates, the separation of church and state, freedom of speech, they are all under pressure because of Islamization. [...] This failure to defend our own culture has turned immigration into the most dangerous threat that can be used against the West. Multiculturalism has made us so tolerant that we tolerate the intolerant." (Wilders, 2011a)

In the above quote, Geert Wilders, a popular right-wing Dutch politician, problematizes not only the ideology of multiculturalism but also the Muslim immigration within Europe. According to Wilders, Islamization – the rise and influence of Muslims in Europe – poses a substantial threat not only to the western liberal way of life but also to democracy at large. Although we may brush aside Wilders' views by labeling them racist or xenophobic, we cannot discount the fact that his views have indeed become an important part of the contemporary Dutch mainstream politics and society. This is clearly evident in the electoral success of Wilders in the Dutch parliamentary elections of 2006 and 2010. In the recent years, the Dutch society has witnessed a growing discontent towards Muslim immigrants. Over time various anti-immigration and anti-Islamic right-wing political parties have come up within Netherlands and the issues of the socioeconomic liability of immigration and the cultural integration of Muslims have become prominent. As of today, "hardly a day goes by without Dutch politicians or other spokespersons problematizing immigrant ethnic groups" (Essed & Trienekens, 2008, p.56). Once hailed as an exemplar of a multicultural democracy, the country now has to defend itself against typifications such as 'the end of tolerance' (Cendrowicz, 2010) and 'the demise of multiculturalism' (Carle, 2006).

It is on the sociopolitical and cultural dynamics of the Dutch public debate on immigration, in relation to the success of right-wing anti-Islamic parties, that the empirical focus of this thesis lies. Through an analysis of the Dutch public debate on immigration, this thesis will provide a detailed understanding of the social shaping[1] of the Dutch public opinion towards Islam. This analysis will not only impart a nuanced understanding of the myriad issues within the public debate but also explicate the import of sociocultural features and particular actors within the social shaping of this debate. The aim of this thesis, thus, is to examine the development and shaping of the Dutch public opinion towards Islam within the historicity of events in the Dutch sociopolitical and cultural landscape. Such an analysis will provide an understanding of not only how hard-lined anti-Islamic parties came to be successful within Netherlands but also what their success implies for the larger Dutch sociopolitical and cultural narrative. The next section provides an intuitive understanding of the public debate to sensitize the reader towards the case study. The rest of the introduction lends an insight into the theoretical framework and research

[1] The use of the term 'social shaping' with regard to public opinion in this thesis refers to the process through which social, political, economic, and cultural factors construct, shape, and influence the public opinion.

methodology employed in this research, and demarcates the research questions and focus points of this thesis.

Right-wing parties, Immigration, and the Public Opinion on Islam

Although the issue of immigration had been identified within Netherlands as early as the eighties (Callejo, Mascareñas, Penninx, & Scholten, 2007), until 2002 it was not a substantial part of the Dutch electoral politics (van Holsteyn & Irwin, 2003). The year 2002 marked one of the most prominent landmarks within the public debate on immigration with the political success of Pim Fortuyn's party *Lijst Pim Fortuyn* (Pim Fortuyn List, LPF). Fortuyn was a flamboyant Dutch politician whose party gained enormous popularity owing to its "anti-establishment sentiments and discontent with immigration [, of Muslim immigrants in particular,] and cultural society" (Holsteyn & Irwin, 2003, as cited in Vossen, 2010, p.6). Fortuyn himself was a vehement critic of Islam and he repeatedly stressed in his interviews and speeches that there was an ideological disjuncture between Islam and the western liberal way of life (Kessel, 2010). However, a few days before the election Fortuyn was assassinated and with his posthumous candidature LPF participated in the elections and was able to garner support from a substantial portion of the electorate, becoming the 2nd biggest party in the Dutch parliament in 2002 (European Election Database, 2002).

The coalition government that came out of these elections could not last for a long time; however, the brief political success of LPF catapulted the issues of immigration and Islam onto the Dutch political agenda (Bos & Brug, 2010). Since then, a large number of anti-immigration right-wing parties, calling themselves heirs of Fortuyn, have come up within Netherlands – the most prominent one being Wilders' anti-Islamic party *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (Party for Freedom, PVV), which has enjoyed substantial political success in the 2006 and 2010 Dutch elections. What is more, the rise of such right-wing anti-immigration parties is not unique to Netherlands and over time a large number of parties, with similar manifestos, have become influential within a host of Western European countries (Vossen, 2010a) and this has had a significant influence on the Dutch sociopolitical and cultural landscape as well (Betz, 1994; van Spanje, 2010). Thus, through the analysis of the Dutch case study, this thesis will also contribute to the empirical understanding of the larger narrative of the growing discontent towards Muslim immigrants in particular, and Islam in general, throughout Western European societies.

Furthermore, the increasing discontent towards Islam within Netherlands has not only been shaped by political actors but also by a number of events that occurred within Netherlands post the assassination of Fortuyn. For example, in 2004, Theo van Gogh, a Dutch filmmaker, in collaboration with a Dutch politician directed an anti-Islamic movie titled *Submission*. The movie, showcasing the oppressive position of women within Islam, was broadcasted on national television and it soon sparked a controversy within Netherlands. In the societal backlash to the movie, van Gogh was murdered by Mohammed Bouyeri, a 26 year old Moroccan immigrant (Henley, 2004), and Netherlands witnessed the second political murder within the span of three years. Another example is Wilders' acquittal in his criminal trial. Owing to his overt criticism of Islam in the media, Wilders was criminally charged on the counts of hate speech and acts of defamation towards Islamic groups in 2010 (Forum, 2011). The trial went on for over eight months, and in June, 2011, Wilders was acquitted of all charges by the Dutch court. The court ruled that Wilders' remarks were just barely within a citizen's right to free expression (Kahn, 2011a). Since then Wilders' has celebrated his acquittal as a 'victory for free speech' (Wilders, 2011b) and has continued to be a vehement critic of Islam. These events, along with other social and

political events within Netherlands, had a substantial bearing not only on the political success of PVV but also on the social shaping of the Dutch public opinion towards Islam.

Another significant factor in shaping the societal hostility towards Islam within Netherlands has been the global outrage in recent years against the perceived threat from Islam. Over the last few years Islam has become one of the most discussed and disputed topics within public and political spheres, especially within America and Europe (Cesari, 2005). September 11 attacks, Madrid bombings in 2003, London subway bombings in 2005, the Iraq war, and increasing problematization of the governance models in Muslim countries have not only become significant factors within the global perception of Islam but also significantly influenced the Dutch public opinion towards Islam and immigration (Carle, 2006; Vink, 2007; van Praag & Adriaansen, 2011). The role and significance of such global outrage, in addition to that of particular politicians and public figures, in shaping and influencing the Dutch public opinion towards Islam will be analyzed in detail in this thesis.

Over time Netherlands has witnessed a growing discontent towards Muslim immigrants. This has increasingly fostered the binary distinction of us/them in the country, where 'us' are identified as Dutch citizens sharing a common history and democratic values, and 'them' are identified as Muslim immigrants from a culture that fosters intolerance and repression (Vellenga, 2008). Within this polarized society, "the public debate [on immigration and Islam] seems close to reaching impasse" (Witschge, 2007, p.1). The discourse of the debate has come to be colored with a perceived cultural incompatibility between Islam and the Dutch way of life, and this has increasingly made it difficult for the two social groups to effectively engage in a dialogue to resolve the tensions (Carle, 2006; Vellenga, 2008; Vink, 2007). Moreover, the rise of Wilders' in the last two elections has only catapulted the issues of immigration and Islam onto the Dutch mainstream politics. Over time a large number of Dutch political parties have come to explicate a harder stance towards the process of immigration, particularly with regard to that of Muslim immigrants (Bos & Brug, 2010; van Praag & Adriaansen, 2011).

As of today, Netherlands slowly inches towards its third parliamentary elections in the span of less than six years. Within the perceived contemporary deadlock on a constructive dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims in Netherlands, this thesis will provide a detailed understanding of how the Dutch sociopolitical and cultural landscape increasingly became colored with the anti-Islamic rhetoric. By showcasing and analyzing the multiplicity of issues that marked a radical shift within Dutch politics – the rise of LPF and PVV – this thesis will lend an insight into the sociopolitical and cultural factors that hinder a constructive dialogue between the two social groups. The Dutch public debate on immigration is not a straightforward narrative. The debate is characterized by a variety of issues that range from the socioeconomic liability of immigration to the perceived cultural incompatibility between Islam and the Dutch way of life. In this thesis, I will analyze the social shaping of the Dutch public opinion towards Islam not only through the historicity of events within Netherlands but also within the multiplicity of issues that are at stake.

The Analysis of the Political Success of Right-wing parties

The success of right-wing anti-immigration parties within Netherlands, and Western Europe, has received quite some amount of scholarly attention especially within the past few years. The researches on this theme can broadly be classified into three groups. The first group comprises of research works that aim to examine and analyze the political success of parties such as LPF and PVV through the ideological

lens of the concept of populism[2] (e.g., Brinks, 2005; Kessel, 2010; Taggart, 2004; Vossen, 2010a). These works primarily focus on particular populistic characteristics of right-wing politicians and political parties. The second group has been focused on examining primarily the role of news media in the political success of such parties (e.g., Maarten & Versteeg, 2009; Marsden & Savigny, 2009; Roggeband & Vliegenthart, 2007; Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007a; van Dijk, 1995). Through quantitative analyses, these researches map out the correlations between the success of right-wing politicians and their exposure in the press. Finally, the third group comprises of research works that examine the sociopolitical and cultural conditions that favor the electoral success of such parties (e.g., Betz, 1994, 2002; Jackman & Volpert, 1996; van der Brug & Fennema, 2007). These researches attempt at analyzing political factors (such as the model of governance within a country) and cultural elements (such as the feeling of xenophobia amongst the citizens) of a society that can have an influence on the success of right-wing parties. It is this third group, with its explicit focus on sociopolitical and cultural dynamics, within which this thesis is primarily located.

Within this strand of research, certain scholars attribute the success of right-wing parties to their particular ability to mobilize the existing hostility within the electorate (e.g., Immerfall & Betz, 1998; Thornton, 2003). Researchers argue that such parties achieve considerable success by exploiting the existing resentment amongst the people with regard to certain sociopolitical and cultural issues – immigration being one of them. These parties, then, garner electoral support by not only denigrating the ruling political elite as being inept to resolve these issues (cf. Betz, 2002) but also by showcasing themselves as the 'true' representatives of the public (cf. Immerfall & Betz, 1998). Such an understanding of the relationship between the rise of right-wing parties and existing resentment amongst the electorate provides a relevant point of entry for the analysis of the Dutch public debate on immigration in this thesis. For it is indeed true that Netherlands has witnessed the rise of anti-immigration parties alongside the increasing public hostility and discontent towards the Muslim immigrants. Time and again, Muslim immigrants have been problematized by right-wing politicians such as Fortuyn and Wilders (Kessel, 2010; Vossen, 2010a) and research has indeed shown a strong correlation between their success and their anti-immigration political manifestos (Kessel, 2011; van Holsteyn & Irwin, 2003).

However, within this research domain the primary focus has been on the ability and tactics of the political parties themselves. Although these works provide a detailed analysis of the relationship between right-wing success and the 'already existing' dynamics within a society, they do not address the issue of how societal discontent and resentment actually emerges. If an important factor in the electoral success of anti-immigration right-wing parties is indeed their ability to mobilize the existing hostility amongst the electorate, then it is imperative to delve one level deeper and understand how such societal feelings are developed and shaped over time. Moreover, it is a fallacy to characterize this ability of the right-wing as unidirectional *(there is a discontent and they exploit it).* As the research in this thesis will show, the rhetoric used by the right-wing (e.g. Wilders) for mobilizing the electorate is also a significant factor in the shaping of the societal perception of the issue itself (e.g. Muslim immigration). Thus, it is not simply that 'there is a discontent and they exploit it', but rather 'there is a discontent and by exploiting it they further problematize it'. Along these lines, the analysis of the shaping of the Dutch public opinion

[2] An in-depth analysis of the concept of populism is beyond the scope of this section. Populism is broadly characterized by two features: a) a denunciation of the ruling political elite in a country, and b) an increased prioritization of the voice of the common public. For a detailed explanation of the concept refer to: Akkerman (2003), Taggart (2000), and Wiles (1969).

towards Islam and Muslim immigrants in conjugation with the understanding of how right-wing parties mobilize the electorate around these issues will provide a significant contribution to the researches within this domain by lending a more nuanced empirical vantage point.

Thus, my aim in this thesis is twofold: a) to first analyze how particular events and public figures increasingly facilitated and fostered the Dutch public hostility towards Islam, and b) to then showcase the correlations between the social shaping of the hostility towards Islam and the electoral success of parties such as LPF and PVV. While explaining the reasons for the success of hard-lined right-wing parties in Western Europe, Betz (2002) argues that their "success at the polls […] depends largely on a party's ability to exploit existing popular *ressentiments* [amongst the electorate in a country]" (p.205, emphasis in original). In this thesis, I will employ the sociological concept of 'ressentiment' to analyze the social shaping of the Dutch public discontent towards Islam and showcase how within Netherlands the ressentiment towards Islam has emerged and shaped over time within the historicity of events and the multiplicity of issues within the Dutch sociopolitical and cultural landscape. The next section will explain the conceptual basis for the research in this thesis – the sociological concept of 'ressentiment'.

Right-wing parties and the dark side of democracy: a philosophical discussion

Before I proceed to the theoretical concept underpinning the research in this thesis, I would like to point out an important assumption on which this thesis operates. Over time scholars (e.g., Berlet, 2005; Berlet & Lyons, 2000; Betz, 1994, 2002) have labeled the right-wing anti-immigration parties as undemocratic and treated them as "pathological symptoms requiring sociological explanation" (Canovan, 1999, p.2). For example, these researchers argue that by abusing the right to free speech and public protest, right-wing politicians undermine the ideals of democracy. Although such a labeling is apprehensible, it reflects a conceptual lack on the part of these authors. In fact, it is primarily the right-wing parties that see themselves as truly democratic (Canovan, 1999; Taggart, 2000, 2004). Portraying themselves as the real voice of the public, these parties garner substantial support at the grass-roots level by foregrounding popular issues and by idolizing the will of the citizenry. Showcasing that they celebrate the democratic ideal of 'power to the people' (Tocqueville, 1899), these parties even go to the extent of supporting forms of "'direct democracy' – political decision making by referendum and popular initiative" (Canovan, 1999, p.2).

Thus, to simply ignore the complex relationship between such right-wing parties and the praxis of democracy is to create a false categorical distinction between what democracy does and does not accommodate for, thereby denigrating everything that seems to go against democracy's definition (as understood by these authors). It must be kept in mind that, resentment, oppression, and right-wing populism, amongst other things, do not lie outside democracy but "belong to its Janus face" (J. Roder, personal communication, March 12, 2012).

Janus is a two-faced Roman God believed to have the power to see both the past and the future simultaneously. His two faces point in opposite directions and appear to stand in direct contrast to each other. Thus, sociologically, the phrase 'Janus face' refers to the idea that a subject may bear polarities and contrasts at the same time. This bears a strong similarity with the idiom 'two sides of the same coin'. Along these lines, in this thesis I do not treat anti-immigration right-wing parties as outliers to democracy, but rather as important challenges that exist within the practice of democracy itself (cf. Akkerman, 2003). In comparison with the approach to footnote the Janus face of democracy as an

outlier, my conceptualization of the practice of democracy has a contrasting element that needs to be explicated. However, before that I wish to make it clear to the reader that I do not attempt to outline a new theory of democracy or to revise an existing one but to only provide a locus of my understanding of the concept.

I argue that there is no rigid categorical distinction between what is democratic and what is undemocratic. By putting forward the thesis of 'meaning is in use', Wittgenstein clearly indicated the importance of 'forms of life' – social and cultural contexts – and human interpretation en route to materializing and understanding social reality (Wittgenstein, 1997). This is not to imply that, for example, dictionary defined meanings are invalid but I argue that we cannot directly draw rigid sociological categories based on them alone. Definitions of a concept, instead of being treated as facts, should be seen as 'social facts' (Durkheim, 1982) that can influence an individuals' understanding and help the researcher by providing a point of entry into a concept or a context. Concept definitions, such as that of democracy, are not fixed in time and space, but are rather shaped and influence by their practice within societies. To treat them as facts would be to deny any agency that social individuals and groups have once a standardized meaning is established by a selected few (Derrida, 1976; Pinch & Bijker, 1984; Winch, 1990; Wittgenstein, 1997).

Substantiating the argument further, I argue that it is possible to articulate a difference between intended and unintended consequences of the practice of democracy in relation to a particular actor within a given context. However, such a difference will be one that contextualizes what is meant by intended and unintended consequences, and that allows for the movement between these extremes in measures of gradation rather than jumping between rigid binary columns. Moreover, such a nuanced understanding of this gradation must begin with highlighting the social groups involved and understanding the sociocultural contexts within which these groups reside and operate. Thus, in this research, the underlying assumption is that popular anti-immigration right-wing parties indeed should be seen as a part and parcel of democracy itself – if not entirely, they should at least be treated as manifestations of the 'dark side of democracy' (M. Mann, 2005). In line with this reasoning, this thesis has a strong empirical focus on the process of social shaping with regard to the multiplicity of societal actors and issues that are part of the Dutch public debate on immigration and Islam.

Ressentiment: A Sociological approach

To understand the features of the concept of 'ressentiment', it is first essential to explicate the difference between ressentiment and resentment. The usage of the word 'resentment' is commonplace in the English vernacular. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, it refers to "a feeling of indignant displeasure or persistent ill will at something regarded as a wrong, insult, or injury" (Merriam Webster Dictionary, n.d.-a). Resentment is normally a reaction borne out of perceived insult or injury "upon one's self [and the nature of the reaction is] based on the actor's definition of the insult, slight, […as] unwarranted, unjust – the result of wrongful conduct or unfair institutions" [3] (Meltzer & Musolf, 2002, p.241). Such a reaction is not only "a protest against the demeaning action but also a defense against the

[3] Opposed to the view that resentment usually stems out of an action to oneself or to someone close to us, the reader must keep in mind that resentment may also occur due to an injury to someone with whom we are not closely related but we nonetheless feel that the injury was not justified (Telban, 1993, as cited in Meltzer & Musolf, 2002). For example, someone who has never encountered a corrupt official may still resent against the corrupt system because he considers wrongful the injustice that it inflicts on the economically deprived.

action's attack on one's self-esteem" (Murphy & Hampton, 1988, p.56). Thus, resentment is a feeling of displeasure or hostility borne out of a felt injury and it is not only a protest against the demeaning action but also a defense mechanism to shield one's own self esteem.

Ressentiment, on the other hand, is a French word that is derived from the verb *ressentir*, which means 'to feel strongly'. Although Friedrich Nietzsche was the first one to use the term in philosophy (see Nietzsche, 1996), it was Max Scheler who developed it into a sociological concept (see Scheler, 2003). Ressentiment and resentment are not entirely different feelings; instead, ressentiment should be understood as a particular version of resentment – to *ressent,* is to resent and more. At the same time the linguistic cousins – resentment and ressentiment – are also marked by conceptual differences in terms of what they signify.[4] Merriam-Webster dictionary's definition succinctly brings out the stark contrast between the two terms by defining ressentiment as "deep-seated resentment, frustration, and hostility accompanied by a sense of being powerless to express these feelings directly" (Merriam Webster Dictionary, n.d.-b). Although this definition does not capture all the nuances of the concept, it provides an intuitive understanding of the two salient features of ressentiment within Scheler's work – the powerlessness to respond directly and the long term sustenance of a hostile feeling.[5]

In addition to the abovementioned two features, Scheler also emphasizes the relationship between social and cultural factors on one hand, and the origins, facilitation, and mobilization of ressentiment on the other (Scheler, 2003). At times, the deep seated hostility within individuals takes the form of "collective ressentiment between peoples, both locally and globally, [and] manifests itself on different levels, which can be economic, social or ethnic" (Blin, 2008, p.13). Such manifestations of collective ressentiment may be seen in certain European countries either in the mass denunciation of political elites or through the emergence of an increasingly xenophobic atmosphere (Betz, 1990; Immerfall & Betz, 1998; Marin, 2008). Within such societies, ressentiment-inspired right-wing politics then increasingly becomes the "basis of relations between the State and the citizens, [and] between states and their people [… In] other words, the silent foundations that underpin governance" (Jiménez, 2008, p.18).

Thus, with regard to the facilitation of a constructive societal dialogue between social groups in a democratic public debate it becomes increasingly important to understand not only how feelings of hostility and ressentiment manifest themselves in a society but also how the public expressions of collective ressentiment draw from and shape the public opinion. Within this context, the conceptual focus of this thesis lies on the analysis of the societal manifestations of collective ressentiment within Netherlands. These manifestations are apparent not only in the public expressions of hostility and discontent within the Dutch debate on immigration and Islam but also through the electoral success of anti-immigration and anti-Islamic politicians such as Wilders. In this regard, this thesis will first present a historical analysis of how the feelings of discontent and hostility towards Muslim immigrants and Islam came to be about within Netherlands. On the basis of Scheler's work on ressentiment, this thesis will then provide an understanding of the extent to which the Dutch sociopolitical and cultural landscape has been affected by the feeling of ressentiment.

[4] For a detailed analysis of the conceptual differences between resentment and ressentiment, refer: Meltzer & Musolf (2002).
[5] A detailed analysis of the sociology of ressentiment is beyond the scope of this section. These features, and more, will be examined in chapter two *'Max Scheler's Sociology of Ressentiment'* that provides a detailed and in-depth analysis of the concept of ressentiment.

However, ressentiment, in essence, is a human feeling. Although both Nietzsche and Scheler articulated certain general features of the emotion, they both dealt extensively with the concept at the level of an individual (see Nietzsche, 1996; Scheler, 1973, 2003). Moreover, ressentiment is also highly contextual owing to the import of societal and cultural factors on its origins and facilitation. This makes it increasingly difficult within a small-scale research, such as this one, to qualitatively inquire at an individual and contextual level into the multiplicity of factors and individuals that are part of the Dutch public debate. Thus, one of the primary hurdles of utilizing Scheler's work to analyze the public expressions of collective ressentiment in the Netherlands is the lack of clear theoretical heuristics to inquire into ressentiment's societal manifestations. The first aim of this thesis is then to examine the heuristics of ressentiment within Scheler's work and develop a sociological mode of inquiry for the analysis of ressentiment's trajectory and nature within contemporary societies. This framework can provide a grounded set of theoretical heuristics not only for the analysis of the Dutch case study but also for future sociological researches with regard to ressentiment. Thus, the first two research questions that this thesis caters to are as follows:

1. What are the heuristics of Scheler's sociology of ressentiment, and how can we employ these heuristics to develop a sociological mode of inquiry for the analysis of ressentiment within contemporary societies?

2. How has the increasing discontent and hostility within the Dutch public opinion towards Islam developed over time; and, to what extent has the Dutch sociopolitical and cultural landscape been affected with ressentiment?

The reason that I have chosen to develop a set of theoretical heuristics of ressentiment – a sociological mode of inquiry – rather than a full-fledged sociological theory or method for its analysis is because of a particular reason. I argue that ressentiment cannot be treated as a binary condition. This is to say that an analysis of ressentiment should not be aimed at the question: *is there ressentiment?* Philosophers have often argued for the contextual nature of a claim (or result) by highlighting the relativism introduced by the standpoint and assumptions of the observer (see Derrida, 1976; Winch, 1990; Wittgenstein, 1997). As I had mentioned earlier, the understanding of the societal factors are paramount to the analysis of ressentiment. Furthermore, ressentiment is always ressentiment *towards* someone – a subject or an abstraction such as the government. Within this understanding, the onus is on the researcher's own interpretation of the case study and the researcher's own assumptions. To create a full-fledged theory or method for ressentiment's analysis will undermine this relativism, thereby lending a positivistic nature to the method itself. Therefore, I have chosen to analyze ressentiment's emergence through the understanding of symptoms (qualified by the theoretical heuristics) not only to preserve its relativistic nature but also to prevent this research from having impressions of determinism.

Ressentiment and the issue of reciprocity

Before I proceed, I would like to point out another aspect with regard to the analysis of ressentiment in this thesis. An analysis of ressentiment must face up to the issue of 'reciprocity'. If societal factors play an important role in shaping the opinions of Dutch people towards Islam, then we cannot deny that these factors will also influence the attitude of the Dutch Muslims. It might very well be the case that there exists ressentiment not only in the Dutch towards Islam but also in the Dutch Muslims towards, perhaps, the far-right political ideology. To showcase the symptomatic existence of ressentiment from 'A' towards 'B' does not imply the 'definite' absence of ressentiment from 'B' towards 'A'. Although that

might be the case, my aim in this research is to particularly analyze the Dutch attitude towards Islam and therefore this thesis does not provide a detailed analysis of the actions of the Dutch Islamic community. Further research is required to understand and examine this reciprocity; however, such an analysis falls beyond the scope of the research in this thesis. Nonetheless, at a few places in the text, I footnote relevant literature that the reader can refer to for understanding the role of Dutch Muslims within the public debate.

The Role and Influence of ICTs on the Dutch public opinion [6]

The Dutch debate on immigration started as early as the eighties and it still continues to be a major issue within Dutch society and politics. Within the trajectory of the debate, the "right-wing and populistic resurgence [against Islam in the Netherlands] has taken place in an era characterized by rapidly expansive and unevenly globalizing developments in communication technology" (Blaagard, 2010, p.2). The trajectory of the debate witnessed prominent events not only within the Dutch sociopolitical landscape but also in the sociotechnical one. The emergence of a large number of publishing houses and broadcasting networks parallel to the advent of the internet exposed the Dutch society to a vast array of mass media. Over time, there has been an increased exposure to information within Dutch society, largely facilitated by the advent of ICTs, and "both organizations and citizens have used […such technologies] on an unprecedented scale" (Michels, 2006, p.331).

In contemporary sociotechnical societies, with regard to the social shaping of public opinion, mass media can be understood "as dynamic sites of struggle over representation, and complex spaces in which subjectivities are constructed and […] contested" (Spitulnik, 1993, p.296). For example, the events of September 11, 2001, and van Gogh's death in 2004 were not only featured prominently within the Dutch news media but also correlated with the issues of immigration and integration within media coverage (see Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007a, 2007b; Wal, d' Haenens, & Koeman, 2005). This nature of mass media coverage led to the development, over time, of Islam-as-threat frame within the media (Ibid.) and increasingly fostered the polarization of attitudes between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Dutch society (Kelley & Morgenstern, 2006). Thus, in this regard, mass media can be seen as representing and mobilizing "popular resentment among the white population at large, whose protests against further immigration or serious equal rights policies are prominently displayed in, and thus further exacerbated by, the news media" (van Dijk, 1995, p.17). Mass media has come to become an important constituent of our society, and ICTs have indeed becomes the 'backbone' of social, economic, and cultural life (Boczkowski & Lievrouw, 2007). Within this understanding, an analysis of the social shaping of public opinion in sociotechnical societies is essentially incomplete without an examination of the import of ICTs on the public opinion.

A large amount of scholarship has focused not only on the import of mass media in shaping and influencing public opinion (e.g., Vasterman, 2005; Wise, Whitney, Wartella, & Grossberg, 2006; van Dijk, 1995) but also on the mutual interdependence between media and politics (e.g., Chadwick, 2006; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Luhmann, 2000). Particularly with regard to the Dutch case study, there has been significant scholarly attention committed to examining the impact of news media on the public

[6] 'ICTs', or Information and Communication Technologies, is a term that is commonly used to refer to digital technology applications, such as the internet, that facilitate the convergence and transmission of large amounts of information. In this chapter, the term ICTs should be understood as referring to the combination of news media and the internet, unless otherwise explicitly stated.

opinion towards immigration (e.g., Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007a; Wal et al., 2005). In line with this research strand, another aim of this thesis is then to provide a detailed analysis of the import of ICTs within the development and shaping of the Dutch public hostility towards Islam. This analysis will impart an understanding of the ways in which ICTs are employed by particular individuals for the social practices of information dissemination and public association. Moreover, through the analysis I will also highlight certain technical feature of ICTs themselves that can have a considerable impact on the way people perceive information, especially with regard to people from other social groups.

Furthermore, this analytical focus on ICTs will also lend a significant insight into the unexplored relationship between the advent of ICTs and the sociology of ressentiment. By highlighting the import of ICTs for the social shaping of the Dutch public opinion towards Muslim immigrants, and subsequently for the ressentiment towards Islam, this thesis will also provide an understanding of how ICTs influence the emergence and shaping of ressentiment within contemporary sociotechnical societies. Although a number of authors have dealt with the concept of ressentiment in contemporary scholarship (e.g., Betz, 1990; Blin, 2008; Jiménez, 2008; Stringer, 2000), very few have actually focused on the import of new forms of communication on the social shaping of ressentiment (Wistrich, 2004). In this regard this thesis will also contribute to the sociology of ressentiment by mapping out the implications of ICTs for the theoretical heuristics of ressentiment. Thus, the third, and final, research question that this thesis caters to is as follows:

3. What is the role and significance of ICTs with regard to the social shaping of the Dutch public opinion on Islam, and subsequently with regard to the sociology of ressentiment?

A precautionary remark

Throughout this thesis, I have employed a significant amount of quantitative data – numbers, percentages, and figures – to analyze and showcase the impact factor and outreach of certain technologies. One of the problems in trying to highlight the significance (and outreach) of internet, and news media, is the issue of 'scale'. Qualitative data analyses operate at a smaller, albeit a more comprehensive, scale than quantitative analyses. Within the logistics of a small research project, such as this one, it becomes impossible to qualitatively understand the perceptions of a large number of ICT users. Hence, I have had to rely on quantitative research data owing to their large scale and outreach. However, the reader must be cautious to not over-interpret the numbers. For example, there are limitations to the interpretations that can be made from a statement such as: 'Fortuyn enjoyed 60 percent of news airtime in March, 2001'. How were his statements understood by the viewers? Was the attitude of the viewers dismissive or the other way around? Such questions cannot be answered by these numbers. Thus, my only objective in using such quantitative data in this thesis is to highlight the amount of *exposure* that, for example, Fortuyn had in the build up to the elections of 2002.

Research Methodology

In line with the nature of my research questions, this research is primarily an exercise in conceptual and content analysis of empirical data. At the conceptual level, this thesis deals with the philosophy and sociology of ressentiment based not only on the primary literature by Nietzsche (1996) and Scheler (2003) but also on secondary literature that deals either with the analysis of Nietzsche's and Scheler's work (e.g., Abbott, 2006; Meltzer & Musolf, 2002; Reginster, 1997) or with the analysis of ressentiment within particular social situations (e.g., Nordstrom, Friedenberg, & Gold, 1968; Risse, 2003). At the

content level, this thesis analyzes the empirics of the Dutch public debate on immigration, in conjugation with the analysis of the implications of ICTs for the social shaping of public opinion and for the sociology of ressentiment.

With regard to the Dutch public debate, a part of the analysis is based on primary literature comprising of Dutch government and ministry reports (e.g., MoECS[7], 2006; WRR[8], 1990), books by politicians (e.g., Wilders, 2011b), and interviews and speeches of politicians (e.g., Wilders, 2008, 2011c). Rest of the analysis is based on a host of secondary literature dealing, amongst other things, with Dutch political history (e.g., Lijphart, 1968), particular Dutch politicians (e.g., Akkerman, 2005), Dutch governance model (e.g., Andeweg & Irwin, 2002), anti-immigration parties (e.g., Fennema, 1997), multiculturalism in the Netherlands (e.g., Doomernik, 2005), the analysis of the success of Dutch right-wing parties (e.g., Kessel, 2010), and journalistic pieces with regard to Dutch politics and the public debate on immigration (e.g., Buruma, 2005; Spiegel Online, 2011; The Economist, 2005).

Within the context of the role and significance of ICTs for the social shaping of public opinion, the analysis finds its footing primarily within secondary literature. Apart from the analysis of primary sources such as the movies made by Dutch politicians (e.g., Wilders, 2008b), the research engages extensively with literature dealing with the analysis of the films made by these politicians (e.g., Zoonen, Vis, & Mihelj, 2010), the impact of media coverage of political assassinations in the Netherlands (e.g., Margry, 2003), the portrayal of politicians within the press (e.g., Kessel, 2010), the portrayal of Muslims in Dutch mass media (e.g., Bink & D'Haenens, 2006), the role of news media in the rise of anti-immigration parties (e.g., Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007a), the relationship between media and politics in the Netherlands (e.g., Semetko, 1998), and the dynamics of the Dutch debate on online forums (e.g., Witschge, 2007).

A note about the analysis of ICTs in this thesis

Any interdisciplinary research work necessitates a large number of choices that have to be made by the researcher. One of the important choices that I have had to make is concerning the 'presentation' of the analysis of the role and significance of ICTs in this thesis: 'whether to present the analysis of ICTs side-by-side with the sociological analysis of the Dutch case study, or to present it separately within a different chapter?' Within the context of this research, I have chosen the latter for a particular reason. The set of theoretical heuristics employed in this thesis draw from Scheler's conceptualization of ressentiment. The thesis not only provides an in-depth analysis of Scheler's work but also builds a sociological mode of inquiry to analyze the symptomatic emergence of ressentiment within Netherlands. To have intertwined such an inquiry with the analysis of ICTs would have made the narrative of this thesis far more complex, posing additional difficulty to the reader for understanding a multiplicity of aspects at the same time. Thus, I have chosen to keep the two analyses separate for the sake of clarity and to keep the flow of the research narrative lucid and succinct. I understand that this choice may make the reader perceive a disjuncture between the two analyses in this thesis. However, to mitigate this difficulty, I have pointed out the role of ICTs throughout the empirical analysis of the Dutch case study, but have only analyzed their import at length within a different chapter.

[7] Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (MoECS)
[8] *Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid* (The Scientific Council for Government Policy, WRR)

Research Limitation(s)

One of the chief limitations of this research is my inability to read, write, or understand the Dutch language. Being a non-native resident of Netherlands, although I became increasingly interested in the Dutch public debate on immigration, I had my doubts about the level of qualitative immersion I could reach without the ability to understand the language. The inability to speak the language limits, primarily, the scope of the empirical data that can be researched. Although I understand the validity of this limitation, I argue that the implications of this limitation with regard to this research are mitigated to a significant extent because of three particular reasons.

First, with regard to the issue of immigration, Netherlands is one of the most over-studied cases within the English literature on international migration (see, e.g., Lucassen & Penninx, 1997; Vermeulen & Penninx, 2000 for detailed historical overviews). Moreover, most of the Dutch government and ministry reports are available in English, and two of the three prominent Dutch public figures whom I focus on – Wilders and Hirsi Ali – have not only published books in English but also presented their views in a large number of opinion-editorials, interviews, and speeches (e.g., Hirsi Ali, 2010; Wilders, 2011b). Furthermore, there exists extensive research in English not only with regard to the rise of anti-immigration political parties in Netherlands (e.g., Akkerman, 2005; Kessel, 2010; Vossen, 2010a, 2010b) but also with regard to the increasing public discontent towards Muslims in the Dutch society (e.g., Brinks, 2005; Ettinger & Udris, 2009; Marsden & Savigny, 2009).

The second reason stems out of a particular choice I have made with regard to the analysis of the interdependence between the import of ICTs and the social shaping of the Dutch public opinion towards Islam. Although there is a plethora of English literature regarding the sociopolitical and cultural landscape of Netherlands, there is still the issue that the content of news media and online discussion forums is predominantly in Dutch. However, owing to my focus in this research on the features of ICTs and on the form of their content, rather than on the explicit analysis of the content itself, this issue is not that significant. Moreover, at particular places in the research, with regard to the analysis of the content of these technologies, I employ a host of secondary literature that deals either with the analysis of Dutch news media, both online and in print, (e.g., Roggeband & Vliegenthart, 2007; Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007a, 2007b) or with the analysis of the public debate on immigration within online discussion forums (e.g., Brouwer, 2004; Varisco, 2010; Witschge, 2007).

Finally, my thesis supervisor Dr. Jan de Roder was really helpful in this regard and throughout the course of this research he has not only clarified all my doubts regarding the Dutch case study but also pointed me towards relevant and important English literature concerning my research. [9] With this I conclude this section; the next section marks the end of this introductory chapter and explicates the trajectory of this thesis.

[9] Within this context I would also like to thank Dr. Sjaak Koenis, associate professor of philosophy at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Maastricht University. He, along with Jan, had an extensive discussion with me regarding Dutch politics and this discussion has helped me a lot in grasping the nuances not only of the Dutch socio-political landscape but also of Scheler's work as well. Prof. Koenis has authored several articles on Dutch politics. He recently gave his inaugural lecture at Maastricht University, The Netherlands, titled *De democratisering van het ressentiment: emancipatie en onbehagen in de Nederlandse politiek* (The Democratization of Ressentiment: Emancipation and Unease in Dutch Politics).

Mapping the Public Debate

This thesis is centered within the research loci of the Cultures of Arts, Science and Technology (CAST)[10] program and is situated at the crossroads of sociology, political science, and Science and Technology Studies (STS). Analyzing Scheler's work on the sociology of ressentiment, this research will first examine the heuristics of ressentiment and build a set of theoretical heuristics for its analysis within contemporary societies. Employing the heuristical mode-of-inquiry, I will then present a detailed analysis of Dutch politics, particularly with regard to the social shaping of the public opinion towards Islam and the concomitant success of right-wing anti-Islamic parties. Furthermore, this thesis will also demarcate and analyze the role and significance of ICTs not only for the social shaping of public opinion within the Dutch democratic debate but also for Scheler's sociology of ressentiment in general.

The second chapter – *'Max Scheler's Sociology of Ressentiment'* – is centered upon the first research question and caters primarily to an in-depth conceptual analysis of ressentiment itself. It examines and expounds on Scheler's work and outlines the heuristics with regard to the sociology of ressentiment. Following up on Scheler's articulation of the importance of societal factors on the origins and facilitation of ressentiment, the chapter first provides a detailed explanation of three factors within contemporary sociotechnical societies that are relevant to the understanding of ressentiment: a) the dominant economic structure of capitalism, b) the increased exposure to information about the public and private lives of social and political elites, and c) the feeling of powerlessness felt by a citizen with regard to affecting a change within democratic governance. In the rest of the chapter I examine Scheler's work on ressentiment and build a set of theoretical heuristics for analyzing it within contemporary societies.

The third chapter – *'Disintegration: The Dutch Politics on Islam'* – is focused on the first half of the second research question, and provides a historical analysis of the nature and trajectory of the Dutch public debate on immigration, especially within the context of the political success of LPF and PVV. The chapter begins by providing a brief analytical overview of the Dutch political system, and then proceeds towards the analysis of the Dutch political landscape and public debate on immigration. It traces out the rise of public discontent towards Islam within Netherlands through the trajectory of five particular events within the Dutch sociopolitical and cultural landscape: a) the assassination of Fortuyn and the political success of LPF, b) Ayaan Hirsi Ali's criticism of Islam, c) the assassination of Theo van Gogh, d) the actions of the Dutch politician Rita Verdonk, and e) the political success of Wilders' party PVV.

The fourth chapter – '*Ressenting Islam: The Wilderness of Netherlands'* – is particularly aimed at the latter half of the second research question. It analyzes the empirics of the Dutch case study by employing the theoretical heuristics of ressentiment developed in chapter two. The chapter starts by explicating Wilders' critique of Islam, and then goes on further to analyze the symptomatic emergence of ressentiment. In conjugation with the analysis of the empirical data from chapter two, the chapter also examines additional empirical evidence with regard to the Dutch public debate on immigration. The aim of this chapter is to showcase the extent to which the Dutch sociopolitical and cultural landscape – in relation to the increasing public discontent towards Islam – is affected by the features of ressentiment.

[10] CAST is 2-year research masters program of Maastricht University, The Netherlands, with an explicit focus on the interrelationships between science, technology, arts, and society.

The fifth chapter – *'ICTs and the Sociology of Ressentiment'* – deals with the third, and final, research question. It demarcates and delineates the role and significance of ICTs for the sociology of ressentiment, particularly with regard to the origins, facilitation, and mobilization of ressentiment within the Dutch society. In this chapter, through the analysis of the empirics of the Dutch case study, I explain three salient features of the mutual interdependence between ICTs and the social shaping of public opinion within sociotechnical societies. The three features are: a) the inflation of information through technological decentralization, b) the easy and affordable communicative outreach furnished by the internet, and c) the implications of the process of framing within news media parallel to the advent of keyword-enabled search online. Finally, the sixth chapter *'Conclusion: Of Turns, Dialogue, and Social Structures'* concludes this thesis by drawing a set of inferences based on the research of the Dutch case study.

2

Max Scheler's Sociology of Ressentiment

> "Social *ressentiment*, at least, would be slight in a democracy which is not only political, but also social and tends towards equality of property. *Ressentiment* must therefore be strongest in a society […] where approximately equal rights (political and otherwise) or formal social equality, publicly recognized, go hand in hand with wide factual differences in power, [and] property […] Quite independently of the characters and experiences of individuals, a potent charge of *ressentiment* is here accumulated by the very *structure of society*." [11] (Scheler, 2003, p.28)

In this quote, Scheler emphasizes the significance of the structure of society in the development of the feeling of ressentiment amongst individuals. Though not denying the significance of an individual's personality or experiences, he argues that when social equality goes hand in hand with factual differences in power, the structure of society has the ability to significantly drive ressentiment on its own. Regarding ressentiment, both Nietzsche (1996) and (Scheler, 2003) agree to the fact that the ressenting individual perceives himself powerless within the socioeconomic structure and this further leads to the possibility of social conflicts. Moreover, Scheler argues that "the origin of *ressentiment* is connected with a tendency to make comparisons between others and oneself" (p.30). Thus ressentiment, in essence, is a contextual feeling that is significantly fostered by particular features of the social, political and economic environment of a society. Therefore, an attempt to explain the notion of ressentiment will not only have to expound on the concept but also explain the external environment, particularly the social realm, within which it occurs. The goal of this chapter is then threefold:

a) to explain certain features of the societal environment that relate to ressentiment;
b) to provide a detailed understanding of the notion of ressentiment; and
c) to create a framework around the theoretical heuristics of Scheler's sociology of ressentiment.

Features of the Societal Environment [12]

This section will provide a backdrop to the societal environment of contemporary societies through the analysis of particular features of the economic, social and political structures. The choice of these three structures is not arbitrary or exhaustive, but instead stems out of Scheler's work on ressentiment. By analyzing Scheler's articulation of the conditions for ressentiment, mentioned in the above paragraph, three key factors can be identified regarding a society that fosters ressentiment. In a society with ressentiment:

a) There must be factual social and economic differences amongst social groups;
b) the social groups must be aware of these differences; and
c) equal human rights or some other form of formal social equality must be present.

[11] The italicized emphasis is in the original quote. From here on, any italicization in the quotes will only reflect the emphasis in the original, unless otherwise explicitly stated.
[12] The term 'societal environment' from hereon should be understood within the context of contemporary sociotechnical democratic societies such as Netherlands.

The first factor concerns itself with the socioeconomic status of social groups and it is quite clear that it draws on the nature of the 'economic structure' of a society. The second factor deals with the public awareness of these differences. The more social groups know about each other, the more they will be aware of the differences amongst them. The amount of this information depends on the nature of the society's 'social structure'. If the social groups are rigidly separated and there is a lack of interaction between them, chances are these social groups will not know a lot about each other (and vice versa). Finally, the third factor deals with the existence of some form of social equality. Moreover, since this equality exists alongside socioeconomic differences, one of the ways to accomplish this in a society is through the 'political structure'. The next three subsections will explain particular features of the economic, social and political structure of contemporary liberal societies. I argue that these factors – the increasing struggle to outperform others, the fluid nature of social hierarchy, and the feeling of powerlessness – influence the social, political, cultural and economic landscape of a democratic society in ways that, Scheler argues, increase the possibility of the cultivation of ressentiment.

Economic structure: the race for progress in a capitalistic society

The economies of contemporary democratic societies operate on a capitalistic model. Of course there are arguments over what this model exactly entails, I refer to the fact that it is an economic ideology that favors merchandizing and profit making. The word capitalism is often used in a degenerative way rather than as a simple qualifier for the state of affairs, and arguments for and against capitalism are anything but scarce. In any case, I believe that "one of the clearest lessons of the last few decades is that capitalism is indestructible" (Žižek, 2007, p.7). It is a major economic force that plays a significant role in configuring our sociopolitical environment and like other social constructs, such as democracy and globalization, capitalism has its own discourse of pros and cons. Nonetheless, it has strongly grounded itself into our forms of life. For example, nations and regions are constantly compared to each other on the basis of per-capita income and Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and the stock and currency exchange rates have become major indicators of development. Moreover, the recent economic crisis in America and Europe has shown that the effects of capitalism transcend into the social, political and cultural realm as well. Our private lives, from the clothes we wear to the houses we live in, are littered with commodities and the display of wealth. To put it succinctly, we are all, whether we like it or not, in an era of the capital.[13]

Today, capital is not only an intermediary that validates the monetary value of a commodity, but also a commodity in itself. In socioeconomic terms, earlier the "structure of motivation [underlying human labor] used to be commodity-money-commodity, [it] is now money-commodity-money" (Scheler, 2003, p.33). Income does not only function as a resource for purchasing commodities but also becomes a determining characteristic of an individual or organization, significantly influencing the location of the subject within the socioeconomic structure. Such an outlook on capital leads to a system, in which a country's development is rationalized as a linear narrative that celebrates the rise of quantifiable capital parameters such as stock indexes, foreign direct investments and GDP. Individual progress, on the other hand, finds its anthem within bank statements, positions of responsibility and materialistic possessions. In such a state of affairs capital is simultaneously a resource and a product, and "the circulation of money as capital is an end in itself, for the valorization of value takes place only

[13] Although the term capital encompasses various discourses – social, fiscal, public etc. – I use the word in a monetary sense to refer directly to money or to other materialistic assets.

within this constantly renewed movement" (Marx, 1990, p.253). Within such an environment, all economic labor is aimed at maximizing capital and the goal of the individual becomes "the unceasing movement of profit-making" (p. 254).

In these circumstances, progress and achievement become synonymous with the possession of capital and material assets and the individual is constantly trying to move up in the socioeconomic structure. No place "is more than a transitory point in the universal chase [… and] the final aim is a *quantity* of monetary value, and it is the quality of the commodity which has become a mere 'transitional goal'" (Scheler, 2003, p.33). Moreover, within a system of free competition, like ours, there is no maximum limit to progress that one cannot transcend, and thus "the aspirations are intrinsically *boundless*, for they are no longer tied to any particular object or quality" (p.33). This leads to increased competition amongst people, and progress translates into the act of outperforming others through commodities.[14] With the number of commodities as a yardstick for progress, the economic categories are marked by high levels of socioeconomic discrepancy in terms of the commodities that each possesses. The term commodity has expanded to included anything and everything because "every object in a consumer society is or may become a commodity" (Turner, 2011, p.90). This commoditization of the world around us provides "infinitely elastic opportunities for status games – of social climbing, social comparisons, and social exclusions, but also of social decline, marginalization and invisibility" (p.89), further fostering the possibilities of ressentiment.

Within this society, we find that the archaic distinction of poor/rich adds little to our understanding of commoditization because the economic categories have attained a more gradient nature marked by nuanced differences. Each economic category is ranked by its purchasing power, which is defined in terms of what money can buy. The rise of the middle class in Asia, and elsewhere, signifies not only the emergence of the citizen with more purchasing power, but also the intensification of competition amongst masses – to become a part of the economic elite, to move from one economic gradient to another, or to progress beyond the middle class completely. The capitalistic system promotes competition, which in turn is heightened by the socioeconomic discrepancies amongst economic classes. The number of commodities becomes an important measure to asses an individual's economic category.

This idea has been extrapolated at a national level and now most of the democratic nations are based on a similar model of commoditization. All contemporary factors point in this direction: the promotion of private ownership, the emphasis on the means of production, the rise of the service industry, the constant struggle to compete economically and more. In short, commodities have become metaphors for our progress and well-being, and competition has become a way of life in contemporary neo-liberal societies. In this way of life, the commitment to progress up the socioeconomic structure "frames the present in a negative light [and] our present condition is devalued as it is assumed transitory, a phase we must endure on our way to better life" (Abbott, 2006, p.19). However, this constant struggle to move up in the socioeconomic hierarchy depends in turn on the nature of the society's social structure. Let us then move on to the next factor: the nature of social hierarchies.

[14] These commodities could be tangible or non-tangible. Tangible commodities would include money, cars, houses, jewelry, and other material possessions. Non-tangible commodities, on the other hand, refer to non-material possessions such as academic degrees, positions of responsibility, etc.

Social structure: the fluid nature of hierarchy favors comparisons

Traditional societies had "tight communities" where individuals from one community were "physically and culturally" separated from those of other communities (Turner, 2011, p.86). For example, in earlier times the peasants not only lived away from the elite but were also culturally very distant. In contemporary societies, there is not only "a greater visibility between social groups" but also the communities are more "open, fluid and contiguous" (Ibid.). Ours is not a society where the elite live in distant far-off lands but one in which the average citizen constantly encounters the successful individuals in his day to day life. If not for physical contact, the plethora of information, gossip and tidbits provided by radio, television, biographies, autobiographies, newspapers, and the internet exposes us to the lives of the political and social elite. Social classes are no longer disjoint but overlap in a variety of ways. For example, the reason we know a lot about the public and private life of politicians and celebrities such as Nicolas Sarkozy, Sonia Gandhi, Silvio Berlusconi, Pim Fortuyn, Amitabh Bachchan, Geert Wilders, Vladimir Putin or Angelina Jolie is not because we personally know them but because their wealth and power are displayed on the global media landscape. To put it succinctly, power and "wealth [are] on display" (Ibid.) to the "underprivileged and disprivileged in large doses" (Ibid.). The social groups nowadays exhibit higher propinquity not only by sharing a greater proximity to each other but also by knowing a lot about the public and private lives of individuals of other social groups. Thus, the hierarchy of social groups is now more malleable and fluid.

I argue that this fluid nature of hierarchy amongst social groups facilitates the act of making social comparisons, in turn encouraging the possibility for the cultivation of ressentiment. The media display of the social and private lives of the political and social elite makes people not only aware of the wealth and power of these individuals but also of their mistakes and shortcomings. Turner (2011), while arguing that the relatively open nature of hierarchies provides a breeding ground for ressentiment, emphasizes that "what counts is the visibility or the display of status wealth, with the proliferation of modern commodities that can so easily carry the hallmarks of superior status – automobiles, wristwatches, homes, attire, holidays, sport, and so forth, namely the cornucopia of commodities that are on display every weekend in Sunday newspapers" (p.90). While this is true, I argue that in conjugation with the visibility of success, the visibility of failure is equally important for the understanding of the conditions for ressentiment. The people who are higher up in the social hierarchy are considered affluent players of the status game but are no longer blindly idolized. For a normal individual, these successful people now not only seem more human in terms of the mistakes they make and the shortcomings they exhibit, but also are no more considered infallible. For example, the information provided by the media coverage of controversies concerning George W. Bush, Suresh Kalmadi, Narendra Modi, Kapil Sibal, Silvio Berlusconi, or Andimuthu Raja has portrayed each of these successful individuals as vulnerable and fallible.

This has in turn changed the way people think about the social categories to which these individuals belong. The growing discontent amongst citizens towards their political systems (Žižek, 2008) and the increasing resistance to scientific authority worldwide (Bijker, Bal, & Hendriks, 2009) are prime examples of cases where the exposure to information has played an important role in rendering the decisions and actions taken by these people open to interpretation. What this increased exposure to information has done is to expose the fact that these individuals do not exhibit an a priori quality or virtue that makes them flawless, but they are indeed just like any other normal human being. This has also influenced the publics' perception of social and governmental institutions to which these individuals

belong. The authority and decisions of the political, social, and technical elite are now continuously challenged by the public. When the people who are higher up in the social structure appear fallible and vulnerable, the average citizen perceives the nature of the values and abilities of these individuals to be relatively similar to his (Scheler, 2003). The act of making social comparisons then becomes more feasible as the compared subject is not seen to have an inherent quality that makes him better. Thus, social comparisons are fostered by shifting the axis of comparison to focus not on the subjects' values and virtues but instead on the subjects' progress and performance within the fluid social hierarchy.

It must be mentioned here that the absence of an a priori differentiating feature among compared subjects does not imply that Scheler was wrong in pointing out that there exist factual differences between them in terms of power, wealth, property and ability. These differences do exist, but my argument is that people rationalize these through the subjects' actions instead of the subjects' inherent virtues and qualities, rendering the act of making comparison justified and frequent. Thus, in such a society an individual seems to be in a position to "consider himself equal to everybody else, while in fact being unequal to them" (Bauman, 2008, p.25). However, theses factual differences exist alongside political equalities. Let us then move to the third and last feature: the feeling of powerlessness that an individual experiences due to the political environment that he resides within.

Political structure: the competing citizen feels powerless in a democracy

Democracy is an exercise in numbers. With the term democracy, I refer to its republic version in which citizens elect the power elite, and the decision-and-policy-making process is garnished with varying levels of public participation. Citizens choose a selected few that will head the state and hopefully embed the demands and wishes of the citizens within the policies and decisions of the state. The elected few, in turn, accommodate the citizens on certain national matters through public participation, national consultations and the like. Although at face value citizens seem to be on top of the game in this form of government, once the government is established "the citizens are independent and feeble; [and] they can do hardly anything by themselves" (Tocqueville, 1899). The stamp on the electoral ballot holds the same significance as the signature on a power of attorney as the majority allocates power to a selected few.

The government, apart from facilitating the political system, decides upon and establishes the policies and decisions for the entire nation, including major fiscal policies and budget reforms. In the world of neo-liberalism, these decisions are not bound to a particular realm and their consequences quickly move beyond the economic or political spheres into the social and cultural realm. Thus, in a system where economic competition is a way of life, the government is a key player that formulates the rules of the socioeconomic performance that is expected out of the citizens. If things are not going well, the recourses to object to the government's actions vary from everyday complaints, to organized protests, to the utilization of one of the established governmental institutions to participate in the political environment. Prime examples of such institutions include the citizen's right to information and the right to protest. Activists, Non-Government Organization (NGO) officials, petitioners – all use a variety of means to make sure the government functions responsibly. However, I argue that in our society, certain circumstances make it quite difficult for an average citizen to actively monitor the actions of the government even if he wishes to.

First, the policies and decisions of the government are usually introduced in large volumes marked with political, legal and technical jargon. This would require citizens to spend a substantial

amount of time in trying to understand these documents, and then further gauge the ramifications of these policies in the public domain. Even if every citizen is considered politically competent, a comprehensive knowledge of the legal, political, scientific and economic system cannot reasonably be expected out of a citizen.[15] Second, as I explained earlier in the subsection *Economic structure: the race for progress in a capitalistic society*, the contemporary way of life is marked with a constant desire for progress, and thus a substantial amount of citizenry is directly involved in the economic sphere. Add to this the demands of their everyday life and you have a situation in which not only is the citizen "distracted by the consumer economy"(VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002, p.30), but his "social life is characterized by endless struggles" (Turner, 2011, p.76). This committed participation in the economic sphere coupled with the everyday logistics renders the actions to monitor the government actions less feasible for the average citizen.[16]

Within this system the citizens have a handful of available means to monitor the activities of social institutions, such as the government or the economy, yet the societal circumstances make it less feasible for a citizen to participate in the decision-making process. The citizens themselves allocate power to the representatives through active participation in the formation of the government; however, various circumstances leave the citizens relatively powerless within the everyday process of governance and they have to depend on the elected representatives to make the decisions on their behalf. This powerlessness resides alongside the competition for economic progress. The individual then finds himself caught up in a competitive situation where societal pressure makes it imperative to perform within the socioeconomic structure. Such a performance has its own set of rules but there exists a paradox: the individual is allowed to have a say in the formulation of the rules of the socioeconomic performance, but he finds that the circumstances make it difficult to do so. In this situation, the citizen feels vulnerable against the authority which may "constitute an abstraction, such as "the establishment", "the system", "the government", or "the economy" – all seen as especially invulnerable [and] in any event, the circumstances are felt beyond one's control" (Meltzer & Musolf, 2002, p.244).

Sum of the parts: contemporary societal environments favor ressentiment

This is a society "where approximately equal rights (political and otherwise) or formal social equality, publicly recognized, go hand in hand with wide factual differences in power, [and] property" (Scheler, 2003, p.28). The fluid nature of hierarchies makes it more likely for social groups to draw social comparisons which constantly remind them of the socioeconomic differences between different social groups. Commoditization has become a way of life and the competitive individual is committed to progressing through the socioeconomic structure. At the same time the individual feels powerless against the social institutions. This is the nature of contemporary societies which, as Scheler and Nietzsche argued, favors the cultivation of the feeling of ressentiment amongst individuals. Such a socioeconomic and political structure is conducive to situations where there exists a discontent amongst citizens that leads to social conflicts involving ressentiment because "through its very origin, *ressentiment* is […] chiefly confined to those who *serve* and are *dominated* at the moment, who fruitlessly resent the sting of

[15] To clarify my stance on citizen's expertise, I wish to make it clear that this claim is directed towards the normative nature of the policy texts rather than taking a normative stance on the citizen's expertise itself.

[16] To this claim, the critics may argue that there have been a number of instances in the past where citizens have actively participated in such projects. I completely agree that citizens can, and have actively participated in policy and decision reforms in the past. Nonetheless, it does not refute my argument that the way to monitor the government's actions is considerably more difficult than simply casting a vote.

authority" (p.27). Preliminary warning signs of such conflicts include the citizens perceiving some policies as unfair (Lynch & Beer, 1990), feeling that a particular gender group enjoys unfair special treatment (Liff & Cameron, 1997), or losing confidence in national institutions altogether (Yankelovich, 1975).

Before I proceed to the next section, two things need to be made clear at the outset. First, I strongly believe that emotions and feelings are not standalone entities that exist independently of their sociocultural contexts (McCarthy, 1989). Thus in the rest of this thesis the generic remarks that I make with regard to human feelings and emotions must not be seen as a contradiction to this fact. The remarks are not an attempt to sketch out the exact details of the feeling itself. They provide a point of entry to understand the discernable contours of ressentiment and help identify social contexts which might foster such a feeling. Second, the volume of literature that deals with ressentiment is way too large to be dealt with in its entirety here. I have limited my focus points not only by the scope of my research questions but also by my theoretical framework. Thus, the rest of the chapter does not claim to exhaustively explain the sociology of ressentiment but instead aims to provide a detailed analysis of relevant placeholders that are essential in grasping Max Scheler's conceptualization of ressentiment.

Few Precautionary Remarks

The rest of this chapter will provide a detailed analysis of ressentiment and delineate a theoretical framework based on Scheler's sociology of ressentiment. However, before I begin, three things need to be qualified. First, ressentiment is often represented as a negative human feeling that is detrimental not only to the individual but also to the society which harbors it. Although Scheler and Nietzsche do mention that ressentiment can have positive effects, both of them have primarily focused on its negative aspects. Thus, it is necessary to keep in mind that ressentiment is also a "potentially positive force" (Stringer, 2000, p.267). Prominent revolutions involving ressentiment, such as the Indian struggle for independence against the British and the Renaissance in Europe, were highly positive and effective forces. Thus, it needs to be kept in mind that ressentiment is not always a negative condition.

Second, although it is true that the inability to execute a direct action is a prime characteristic of ressentiment, we cannot generalize that ressentiment is characterized by a total absence of any direct action. This is a completely wrong interpretation. Ressentiment is not characterized by a complete absence of actions but rather by inability of actions to affect a change in the individual's condition. As will be explained later in this chapter, sometimes the ressenting individual is quite active and acts out of passive aggression towards other subjects. Moreover, ressenting individuals often feel a sense of compassion and belonging with others who are in similar situations and these individuals come together to take collective action. However, if these acts of passive aggression or collective actions are unable to affect a change, the ressentiment will sustain, if not be strengthened.

Finally, owing to the characteristic of powerlessness attached to ressentiment, there is a tendency to attribute this feeling only to deprived groups of individuals. Successful individuals, and social and economic elite, are often considered free of ressentiment. This is not entirely true. Although the deprived state of these social groups often provides a fertile ground for ressentiment, we must keep in mind that power is contextual. This is to say that powerless does not imply 'zero' power but rather a relative lack of it. The characteristic of powerlessness is found not only in the deprived individuals but also in others. For example, the opposition party may feel powerless against the ruling government, the

vice admiral may feel powerless against the fleet admiral, and the business tycoon may feel powerless against some economic policies. Thus, with regard to ressentiment, powerlessness should be understood as a relative characteristic and not a fixed one.

Max Scheler's Sociology of Ressentiment

Ressentiment is, in essence, a human feeling. Scheler, while drawing on Nietzsche's work, characterized it as a "self-poisoning of the mind […and] a lasting mental attitude, caused by the systematic repression of certain emotions and affects which, are normal components of human nature" (Scheler, 2003, p.25). According to him, the emotions and affects that are primarily concerned with ressentiment are "revenge, hatred, malice, envy, the impulse to detract, and spite" (Ibid.). Moreover, each of these, in itself, "is not *ressentiment* […, these] are only stages in the development of its sources" (p.26). Ressentiment, and each of these feelings, is thus a phenomenon that occurs on an individual basis. Moreover, as I have argued earlier, each of these feelings is contextual and depends on the societal environment within which the ressenting individual resides. How then can we employ the sociology of ressentiment to further our understanding of controversies when we cannot qualitatively study all the concerned human actors individually? What can the sociology of ressentiment provide to help analyze the rise of right-wing parties in the Netherlands? The answer lies in the nature of the theoretical framework that can be drawn from Scheler's work.

However, the act of creating a theoretical framework necessitates selection from a set of choices. These choices are not only influenced by the case studies but also by the nature of the questions that the researcher asks. The selection of my case study and the nature of research questions have significantly contributed to the theoretical framework of this research in two ways. First, the focus is not on the feeling of ressentiment at the level of an individual but instead on the public expressions of ressentiment by social groups and particular actors. This certainly does not imply that the analysis of ressentiment at the individual level has little to offer to this thesis because particular social actors can play a significant role in influencing the group dynamics; however, I focus more on the sociology of ressentiment rather than the feeling itself. For example, ressentiment often takes a collective form and ressenting social groups often come together for a common cause. In these situations, ressentiment can be seen as the expression of "the socially responsible insistence of the community on justice and justification" (Solomon, 1994, p.124).The focus of this thesis majorly lies in these forms of public expressions of ressentiment.

Second, the framework is explicated in a particular way that accommodates for the change in contexts that occurred post 1912. Scheler published his sociology of ressentiment in that year. To argue that exactly 100 years down the line, you can simply pick up his work and apply it to contemporary issues is pointless, if not entirely daft. There is a need to revisit his arguments in light of current developments but at the same time there is a need to preserve the nuances of the concept. Although ressentiment does exhibit certain salient features, to simply create a framework around the features of the feeling is to deny that ressentiment is a subjective response to the social environment. Scheler himself argued this and asserted that the origin and intensity of ressentiment can be attributed "primarily to hereditary factors and secondarily to social structure" (Scheler, 2003, p.36). In any case, one thing is for certain: the analysis of societal factors that influence the individual is paramount to the sociology of ressentiment. A focus on the public expressions of ressentiment of social groups must go hand in hand with an analysis of contemporary societal factors. Thus, I have constructed my theoretical

framework around a set of discourses that constitute the social environment within which the groups reside.

Lessa (2006) summarizes Foucault's description of discourses as "systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak" (p.285). Discourses thus play a significant role in our lives and shape our perception of the world by helping us create a meaningful understanding of social situations and organizing the way we behave towards objects and people. They, thus, provide the lens through which people perceive reality, formulate their opinions, and constitute their actions. Discourses, thus, provide a point of entry to understand the public expression of ressentiment by social groups and particular actors, for the origins and facilitation of ressentiment, in essence, depends on the way an individual perceives the world around him. This perception, as I have argued, is in turn intrinsically tied up to the societal discourses. However, rather than to fix 'a particular kind of discourse' as the underlying cause of ressentiment, the aim of the framework is to provide a 'set of discourses' that can help understand public expressions of ressentiment within contemporary sociotechnical societies. This helps to preserve not only the subjective nature of ressentiment by allowing a multiplicity of interpretations but also accommodates for the change in societal contexts by focusing on discourses rather than particular societal features.

The next sections will now present an analysis of ressentiment in terms of a theoretical framework categorized into five discourses. This is not an exhaustive list but one that is informed by my own understanding of the sociology of ressentiment.[17] The argument is not that these are the *only* five discourses that can help explain ressentiment; instead, I argue that any contemporary explanation of ressentiment must *at least* cater to these five discourses. The rationale for the choice of these discourses relates to some of my arguments in the preceding sections. Moreover, all of these discourses interpenetrate at multiple levels. The fact that they are presented in isolation does not imply that they are mutually exclusive. This is the reason that the reader will encounter repetition in a few places. However, I have consciously tried to keep the discourses unique to each other because an individual articulation of the discourses helps to present a nuanced understanding of each of them. Table 1 lists the five discourses and their corresponding conceptual ideas (taken from this chapter) so that the reader can get an intuitive sense of the nature of each discourse.

Discourse	*Representative Conceptual Idea*
The discourse of actions	Ressentiment is characterized by the inability to take direct *actions*.
The discourse of means	The citizens have a handful of available *means* to monitor the activities of social institutions, yet the circumstances make it less feasible to employ them.
The discourse of social hierarchy	The *factual discrepancies* amongst groups and the fluid nature of *social hierarchy* promote ressentiment.

[17] I had initially categorized six discourses with regard to ressentiment. The sixth discourse was the discourse of *power*. Ressentiment has a strong connotation of powerlessness attached to it and thus it is important to articulate the nature of power relations that can harbor ressentiment. I strongly believe that to understand the nuances of ressentiment we need to understand the discourse of power in a society. However, as the reader will note the discourse of power draws and influences all of the other five discourses that I have mentioned in Table 1. Human actions, means, social hierarchy, social institutions and social outreach are all related to the power relations existing in a society. Thus, I have chosen to keep this sixth discourse as a subtext to the other discourses rather than trying to articulate it separately.

The discourse of social institutions	The citizens feel *powerless* and *vulnerable* against certain institutions in a democracy.
The discourse of social outreach	Ressentiment often takes a *collective form* and ressenting social groups often *come together* for a common cause.

Table 1: Discourses and the sociology of ressentiment

With regard to the discourse of actions, it must be noted that the possibility of human actions is not only limited by the physical and mental characteristics of an individual but also by the means that are present at his disposal, the social structure within which he resides, and the rules and regulations imposed by the social institutions. Thus, it is clear that the discourse of human actions, specifically, is influenced by a majority of societal factors – namely, all the other four discourses. Moreover, since Scheler was primarily interested in the understanding of ressentiment as "a unit of experience", most of his sociology deals with ressentiment at the individual level (Scheler, 2003, p.24). Because of these reasons, out of the five discourses, the discourse of actions forms the bulk of the remaining chapter. The rest of the four discourses are then explained later, drawing on the explanation of the discourse of actions itself.

The Discourse of Actions

Every individual or group action has three characteristics: the motivation for taking an action, the selection of a particular action out of possible ones, and the consequences of the chosen action. What is particularly important with regard to ressentiment are "the conditions under which ressentiment emerges as a motive […force] and the manner in which […these feelings] are expressed" (Abbott, 2006, p.17). Thus, the discourse of actions pertaining to ressentiment must provide a vocabulary to explain the nuances of the motives or reasons for ressentiment, the heuristics of the rational choice between possible actions, and the subsequent consequences of the chosen action. Such a discourse can help discern the trajectory and nature of the actions that may lead to ressentiment. Categorized into these three features, this section will explain the discourse of actions that relate to ressentiment.

The motives or reasons for ressentiment

- "[The] manner in which *ressentiment* originates in individuals or groups, and the intensity it reaches, is due primarily to hereditary factors and secondarily to social structure. […The] social structure itself is determined by the hereditary factors and the value experience of the ruling human type. […In] addition to these general preconditions, there are some *types of ressentiment* which are grounded in certain typically recurrent 'situations'" (Scheler, 2003, p.36).

In this quote, Scheler mentions the role of social structures, hereditary factors, and certain recurrent situations in the origins of ressentiment. Regarding social structures, I have already shown that in our society the social, political and economic environments are conducive to the origin of ressentiment. The ever-competing individual is under an imperative to perform and is constantly reminded of his place in the socioeconomic structure. Moreover, he feels powerless against social institutions such as the government because certain circumstances make it less viable for him to participate in the decision-making process. The other two determinants – hereditary factors and typically recurrent situations – relate more to the culture of individual societies. These cultural factors, as Scheler notes, also influence the nature of other social structures.

Every culture is marked with particular characteristics that are passed down over generations and influence the everyday actions of individuals and their understanding of the world. In particular circumstances these characteristics lead to particular situations that foster ressentiment. Scheler does not argue that "every individual in these 'situations' is necessarily gripped by *ressentiment*" (Ibid.) but instead he asserts that "by virtue of their *formal character* itself – and quite apart from the character of the individuals concerned – these 'situations' are *charged* with the danger of *ressentiment*" (Ibid.). I will now explain this with the help of an example.

In a lot of cultures women are generally subjected to such situations. There is a long history to the repression and ill-treatment of women which has fostered the belief that "she is the weaker and therefore the more vindictive sex" (Ibid.). Such a situation still exists, for example, in certain parts of rural India where the girl is forced into a child marriage irrespective of her wishes. Moreover, the draconian custom of Sati, the act of setting a woman on fire when she is widowed, is still practiced and sustained by social approval in some parts of rural India (Khan, 1999). Although the situation has changed for the better in most contemporary societies, we can see that there still exist traces of this culture. It is in these situations that the woman finds herself ill-treated. If she is unable to make a practical change in this situation, she feels inferior and bears a hostile feeling towards the establishment, against which she is powerless. Such sustenance of hostile feelings and the powerlessness to take immediate practical action, as we already know, are salient features of ressentiment. There are more examples of these kinds of situations: the tensions between the older/younger generation and the acts of racism amongst ethnic groups. However, an in-depth explanation of these is not relevant to the scope of the argument in this subsection. The core of the argument is that cultural factors play an important role in determining the social structure of a society. These factors can lead to situations where particular social groups are systematically repressed and made to feel the sting of authority, facilitating the potential for ressentiment.

- "Another source of *ressentiment* lies in *envy, jealousy,* and the *competitive urge*. […] In all these cases, the origin of *ressentiment* is connected with a tendency to make comparisons between others and oneself" (Scheler, 2003, p.29-32).

Scheler mentions envy, jealousy and the competitive urge as other possible sources of ressentiment. He asserts that common to all of these is the social act of making comparisons. The competitive urge facilitated by the socioeconomic competition existing in liberal democratic societies has already been discussed in the previous sections. Scheler argues that feelings of envy and jealousy are linked to this competitive urge in that envy and jealousy are "due to a feeling of impotence which we experience when another person owns a good we covet" (p.29).

The knowledge of this lack or absence of a coveted commodity presents itself when an individual makes a comparison with someone who actually possesses the desired commodity. There is a distinction that needs to be made here. Simply being displeased about the fact that another person possesses a desired commodity is different from being envious about it. The envious person will not "fall under the dominion of *ressentiment* if he seeks to acquire the envied possession by means of work, barter, crime, or violence" (p.26). For envy takes birth "when we fail in doing so and feel powerless" (p.30). It is this particular feeling of failure and powerlessness that builds up to ressentiment when "the coveted [commodities] are such [that they] cannot be acquired and lie in the sphere in which we compare ourselves to others" (Ibid.). In a society like ours there exist high levels of social discrepancy between

socioeconomic groups and the fluid nature of the social hierarchy fosters comparisons between them. If at any point it becomes very difficult to obtain a desired commodity, an individual may become overtly jealous and envious, and in the long run the unfulfillment of this desire may lead to ressentiment.

- "Thirst for revenge is the most important source of *ressentiment*. […] The desire for revenge – in contrast with all [its] active and aggressive impulses, be they friendly or hostile – is also […] a reactive impulse [just like ressentiment]. [Moreover, revenge] is always preceded by an attack or an injury." (p.25)

In this quote, Scheler states that the thirst for revenge is the most important source of ressentiment. He argues that similar to ressentiment, the desire for revenge is also a reactive impulse that is preceded by an attack, or slight. It must be noted that he identifies the 'thirst' for revenge as the characteristic source of ressentiment rather than the 'act' of taking revenge itself. That act, as Scheler notes, is usually marked with violent, aggressive or hostile human actions. However, one of the salient features of ressentiment is the individual's inability to take immediate direct action. Thus, "[there] will be no *ressentiment* if he who thirsts for revenge really acts and avenges himself, if he who is consumed by hatred harms his enemy" (p.26).

Scheler also asserts that "there is a progression of feeling which starts with revenge and runs via rancor, envy, and impulse to detract all the way to spite, coming close to ressentiment" (Ibid.). Moreover revenge, envy, and rancor have one thing in common. They are all directed towards particular objects or subjects. However, there needs to be the sustenance of these feelings for them to progress towards ressentiment. The desire for revenge "disappears when vengeance has been taken" (Ibid.) and envy vanishes "when the envied possession becomes ours" (Ibid.). However, the impulse to detract and spite are more detached and thus are not directed towards particular subjects. These two feelings can, as will be shown in the next subsection, either be directed towards social situations and abstractions or towards any subject that appears to have a particular trait. Now that the three main motivations for ressentiment have been explained, the next subsection will explain the heuristics of the rational choice that the individual makes between possible actions that are motivated by these three features.

The heuristics of the rational choice between possible actions

- "[A particular feature of ressentiment is the awareness that] I hate a certain person or want to take vengeance on him, and I am fully conscious of my reasons – of the act by which he harmed me. […This feeling of hatred or vengeance] may detach itself even from the man who has injured or oppressed me. Then it turns into a negative attitude towards certain apparent traits and qualities, no matter where or in whom they are found" (p.43)

In the previous subsection, I showed that the desire for revenge, the social and cultural factors, the feelings of envy, jealousy, and competition – all play an important role in fostering ressentiment. However, since ressentiment is a reactive impulse it is imperative for a ressenting individual to have a particular subject to which he is responding in the form of his ressentiment. This is to say that there is no 'ressentiment in and of itself' but only a *'ressentiment towards'* the subject responsible for the painful circumstances.

In the above quote, Scheler explicates a similar argument. He mentions that not only does the individual directs his feeling of revenge towards a particular subject, but also that this feeling may detach

itself from that very subject and direct itself towards an entire social group – any subject that exhibits similar traits to the injurer. When this reallocation of responsibility occurs, the act of revenge becomes even more difficult because then there is not 'one' injurer but rather an entire social group, a circumstance or even the government who is responsible for the wrongdoing. Within this process of reallocation of responsibility "revenge tends to be transformed into *ressentiment* the more it is directed against lasting circumstances which are felt 'injurious' but beyond one's control" (p.28).

Thus, we can see that one of the key criterions for ressentiment to originate is the conscious awareness of the subject, social group or social situation that is deemed responsible for the felt injury[18] – the feeling that *'it is only because of him that I am in this situation'*. However, when the subject responsible for a particular situation has been identified, what stops the individual from taking revenge? What is the characteristic feature of the thirst of revenge that makes it the most important and viable source of ressentiment? To answer these questions, I will now examine Scheler's definition of revenge.

- "Revenge is distinguished by two essential characteristics. First of all, the immediate reactive impulse, with the accompanying emotions of anger and rage, is temporarily or at least momentarily checked and restrained, and the response is consequently postponed to a later time and to a more suitable occasion ('just wait till next time'). […] Furthermore, it is of the essence of revenge that it always contains the *consciousness* of 'tit for tat', so that it is never a mere emotional reaction. These two characteristics make revenge the most suitable source for the formation of *ressentiment*" (p. 25).

In this quote, Scheler identifies two defining characteristics of revenge that make it the most important and viable source of ressentiment. First, the individual's immediate reactive impulse is blocked and deferred to another place and to a more suitable time. This is further qualified by the fact that ressentiment is characterized by the long term sustenance of the feelings of anger, hatred or envy. Since the act of taking revenge helps vent out these feelings, if the revenge is actually taken, the feelings will complete their motives and mostly disappear. Revenge, envy, anger, and spite "lead to *ressentiment* only if there occurs neither a moral self-conquest (such as *genuine* forgiveness in the case of revenge) nor an act or some other adequate expression of emotion" (p.26). It must be noted here that in conjugation with the inability to take direct action, the deference of the action is an important characteristic of ressentiment and "the indefinitely prolonged time lag between felt injury and redress-oriented reaction to its agent is [its] crucial component" (Meltzer & Musolf, 2002, p.244).

To clarify it further it is important to assert that ressentiment only arises when such emotions are "particularly powerful and yet must be suppressed because they are coupled with the feeling that one is unable to act them out – either because of weakness, physical or mental, or because of fear" (Scheler, 2003, p.27). This is why Scheler argues that the individuals who serve, who are dominated, and who constantly feel the sting of authority have the largest potential for ressentiment. In these situations the blockage of the reactive impulse is caused "by the reflection that an immediate action would lead to defeat" (p.25). This rational reflection finds its footing either in the physical and mental weakness of the

[18] It must be mentioned in passing that "we tend to excuse or forgive otherwise resentment-inducing actions when the agent is seen as not being responsible for his/her injurious behaviour" (Watson, 1993, as cited in Meltzer & Musolf, 2002, p.247). That is, we are inclined to inhibit ressentiment if we feel that the injurer is acting uncharacteristically owing to extraneous circumstances, psychological disabilities, psychotic or neurotic tendencies, or unfavourable circumstances.

injured individual or in the fact that the injured individual is afraid.[19] Thus, for both Nietzsche and Scheler, "*ressentiment* is a generalized, chronic feeling that involves both a desire for revenge against its perpetrator(s) and a failure to express the revenge in direct action" (Meltzer & Musolf, 2002, p.243).

The second characteristic that Scheler mentions in the quote is that revenge operates on the model of tit for tat. It is important to know that Scheler explicates this point primarily as a response to a work by a different author – C. R. Steinmetz. A detailed explanation of Steinmetz's work is not relevant to this argument but I will highlight a few points that explain what Scheler meant. In his work on the genealogy of revenge, Steinmetz differentiated between directed and non-directed revenge (Steinmetz, 1894, as cited in Scheler, 2003). Whereas directed revenge is aimed at the actual injurer, non-directed revenge is aimed towards other subjects. Non-directed revenge also includes acts of violence against the injurer's family, social group or tribe. Scheler argues that in this analysis Steinmetz wrongly concludes that the transfer of the direction of revenge from the offender to the offender's family or social group "is caused by the awareness that the offender would suffer in sympathy with his stricken companion" (Scheler, 2003, p.128). Scheler instead argues that revenge is *always* directed and there is no transfer in the direction of revenge because the injurer contends that "the tribe or family is the real *perpetrator* and that the individual member is simply its organ" (Ibid.). This argument should be seen as further explanation to what Scheler, as mentioned in the previous point, means when he asserts that the feeling of hatred or vengeance may detach itself from the injurer. For Scheler, revenge is always directed and any change in the subject of revenge implies that the injured individual believes the original subject to be a part of a bigger social construct – such as a social group, or a tribe – that is responsible for the injury. This can be seen, for example, when an individual becomes a victim to the corruption of government officials, instead of taking revenge on these particular individuals, often the subject ressents the entire group of government officials or the system of governance itself.

Therefore, the act of blocking and deferring the desire for revenge is a characteristic starting point for ressentiment. Moreover, revenge is always directed against the injurer or to another social construct of which the injurer is considered to be an organ of. Thus, once the individual is exposed to a factor that motivates ressentiment, he will only be susceptible to it if he makes a rational choice of blocking his immediate reactive impulse. This could either be because of physical or mental weakness, fear, or some other reason. This particular choice of deterring and deferring one's actions has consequences for the individual itself. These will be explained in the next subsection that concludes the explanation of the discourse of actions pertaining to ressentiment.

The subsequent consequences of the choice to block and defer the reactive impulse

- "[The blockage of reactive impulse] is caused by the reflection that an immediate reaction would lead to defeat, […it is also characterized] by a concomitant pronounced feeling of 'inability' and 'impotence'. […Once such a reaction is] blocked, the consequence is a process which may best be designated as 'repression'. […] The repressive forces are: a feeling of

[19] The word *rational* is of prime importance here. Ressentiment is not a fleeting phase in an individual's life. The fact that ressentiment is a long term chronic feeling implies that the ressenting individual not only returns back to this feeling at particular times, but also is unable to respond and take action. As Solomon (1977) puts it, "there is more logic in resentment [and in turn ressentiment] than in the routine calculations of syllogizing" (p.46). Thus, by including the word rational here, I wish to exclude two particular set of actions: reactive impulses that are actually carried out, and acts of self-defence.

> impotence (a pronounced awareness of inability) […], fear, anxiety, and intimidation." (p.25, 42)

Scheler mentions that the inability to act out the immediate reaction is marked by a pronounced feeling of impotency in the individual. The individual powerlessly desires to take revenge, to vent out hatred, or to possess a coveted commodity. The consequence of blocking the immediate reactive impulse is that the injured individual becomes a victim to repressive forces. The repressive forces are: feeling of impotence, fear, anxiety and intimidation. It is worth noting here that these feelings are simultaneously the cause and effect of the blockage of the action. While describing the characteristic feature of revenge – blockage and deference of the reactive impulse – Scheler had asserted that such a blockage is caused due to fear, or physical and mental weakness of the individual. Thus, these feelings not only deter the individual from reacting, but also get reaffirmed as a result of the deterrence. Moreover, this feeling of impotence "is not a temporary state of mind caused by an accidental reversal of fortune, [rather it becomes] an essential feature of one's self assessment: the agent sees himself as irremediably weak" (Reginster, 1997, p.286).

However, the powerless individual simultaneously finds himself living in the society that harbors the very subject of his repression. The injured individual is "painfully tied up with the past […and keeps] re-feeling it"(Risse, 2003, p.161). Moreover, the individual is also under an imperative to perform in the society and it is during this performance that the repressive forces play an important role in the way he perceives the world around him. In this situation ressentiment "dwells in the fluid spaces between the amoral affluence of the socially mobile and justified resentment of those whose declining position traps them in a suburban wasteland" (Turner, 2011, p.90). Finally, for attaining some sort of gratification, the ressenting individual or social group may entertain "*Imaginary* or symbolic revenge, […which] often takes the place of actual retaliation" (Meltzer & Musolf, 2002, p.248). One of the prime examples of this sort of imaginary revenge is "a transformation of values, a substitution of new, attainable values for those which appear unattainable" (Ibid.). The next point further elaborates on the particularities of this process of value transformation.

- "[The] oppressive sense of inferiority [and impotence] which always goes with the "common" attitude cannot lead to active behavior. Yet the painful situation demands relief. To relieve the tension, the common man seeks a feeling of superiority or equality, and he attains his purpose by an illusory *devaluation* of the other man's qualities or by a specific "blindness" to these qualities. […When] we feels unable to attain certain values, *value blindness* or *value delusion* may set in." (Scheler, 2003, p.34)

When the powerless individual finds himself caught up in a situation in which he is unable to execute the reactions he desires, he feels afraid, anxious, intimidated and impotent in the wake of his injurer. To relieve himself in this painful situation the individual searches for a way to feel superior or at least equal to his injurer. Scheler argues that one of the ways the individual tries to achieve this is through an imaginary devaluation or blindness towards the other man's qualities or values. For example, when an individual is unable to attain a coveted commodity or to take revenge, he may reason to himself that the commodity is not worth aspiring for *('the grapes are sour')* or that revenge is not worth taking because he is morally superior to his injurer *('otherwise what will be the difference between me and him')*. Scheler articulated this human tendency as a psychological law and stated that human beings tend "to overcome any strong tension between desire and impotence by depreciating or denying the positive value of the desired object" (p.45-46). This particular value delusion or value blindness is a characteristic feature of

ressentiment that is found absent in its English counterpart. Thus, "*ressentiment* is not resentment, but resentment that has become internalized, in which the weak have rationalized their own weakness by inversely privileging it as morally superior to the strong" (Birns, 2005).

Scheler goes on to argue that such an individual lowers "all values to the level of [his] own factual desire or ability […], construing an illusory hierarchy of values in accordance with the structure of [his own] personal goals and wishes" (Scheler, 2003, p.35). Thus, ressentiment is generative of values and value hierarchies, and can conjure up new values such as "the *ressentiment* of natures that [deny] the true reaction, […and] of deeds, esteemed, desired and possessed by the [powerful]" (Morelli, 1998). Parallel to the delusion or blindness towards certain values, the ressenting individual modifies his own discourse of values in accordance with his own desires. Scheler asserts that this "*ressentiment* delusion" (Scheler, 2003, p.35) that is generative not only of shifts in values but also of the values themselves can be understood through the fundamental relation between "*value consciousness and desire*" (Ibid.).

In *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values* Scheler explicates the sociology of values in the form of an eternal hierarchy of human values (Scheler, 1973). An in-depth analysis of the hierarchy is beyond the scope and relevance of this thesis. I have already explained that the focus of this thesis is limited to public expressions of ressentiment by particular social groups and individuals. However, the connotation of value delusion, blindness and generation is of key importance to the understanding of these expressions. Thus, I am going to primarily focus on a particular trait that is characteristic of ressentiment delusion: "a sense of being denied what we believe is our just due" (Meltzer & Musolf, 2002, p.245). Vulnerability and powerlessness do not lead to ressentiment delusion if these feelings are not accompanied by a concomitant feeling of being justified (Scheler, 1973, 2003). Only when the ressenting individual's desire feels justified he might have a tendency to participate in ressentiment delusion. Moreover, this justification works both ways – for the justification of the act of revenge as well as the justification of the original desire of the injured - *'my revenge is justified because he took away something that I truly deserved'*. Thus, the desire to act is borne not only out of *aspiration* but also out of a sense of *justice*. This sense of justice has implications for the expressions of ressentiment by social groups. I will now illustrate this point by giving the example of the recent protests by the 'occupy movement' groups.

The *Occupy Wall Street* protest began on September 17, 2011, in the financial district of New York and kick started a host of occupy protests and movements worldwide. These protesters voice their concerns over the high level of socioeconomic inequality in our society, the ever-increasing corporate influence on governments worldwide, and the rampant corruption that has infected democracies everywhere. These groups are formed of individuals that, I argue, ressent the social institution of capitalism and corporations that governs the society around them. These individuals perceive themselves to be a victim of the repressive ideology of the institution of financial capitalism, and the argument is that financial capitalism and economic globalization are "gradually but inexorably undermining the legitimacy of western democracies" (Žižek, 2012). The fluid nature of social hierarchy further facilitates the awareness of the socioeconomic discrepancy between them and the wealthy individuals. These individuals try to compete, but feel that they are at a disadvantage because they find it difficult to change the repressive rules of the economic competition. With regard to the political structure, they argue that democracy cannot help them because "due to their international character, large economic processes cannot be controlled by democratic mechanisms which are, by definition, limited to nation state" (Ibid.). Feeling vulnerable, powerless, and unable to affect a change, over time these individuals then start

ressenting the whole system itself because they perceive that "the problem is not corruption or greed, the problem is the system that pushes you to be corrupt" (Ibid.).

I argue that in this situation a sense of justice is attached to the powerless and impotent desire of the protesters, and ressentiment delusion sets in. The ressenting individuals not only feel that their desire to bring down capitalism is justified but also believe that they truly deserved – socioeconomic equality and a good standard of living – what capitalism took away from them. This makes the ressenting individuals participate in the process of value delusion in which the initially aspired qualities of wealth and power are no more desired because they belong to the wrongful subject of ressentiment – the system of capitalism – and are thus *de facto* devalued as ethically unjust and morally repressive. The rich and powerful individuals that earlier could have been the role models of these protestors are now seen as villains of capitalism possessing the devalued qualities of wealth and power. Finally, under the common justified cause of *making the world a better place* these scattered individuals come together and protest against the subject that has taken their rightful belongings from them.

The opening lines of Žižek's speech, now the symbolic manifesto of the occupy movement, embody these feeling and help substantiate my claim: "They are saying we are all losers, but the true losers are down there on Wall Street. […] We are not dreamers. We are the awakening from a dream that is turning into a nightmare. We are not destroying anything. We are only witnessing how the system is destroying itself. […] We don't want higher standard of living. We want a better standard of living" (Žižek, 2011a). Through this example, we see that the sense of justice underlining the impotency of the desire of the ressenting individual has two major features. First, it facilitates public expressions of ressentiment not only because they all aspire for the same thing but also because they believe that it is the right thing to do *('let us all come together to make the right change')*. Second, it justifies not only the actions of the ressenting social groups but also their desires *('they had it coming because they deprived us of our rightful possessions')*. When such a sense of justice comes face to face with the impotency of the ressenting individual's desire, value delusion sets in and rearranges the existing value hierarchy. However, this illusory hierarchy of values exists alongside the dominant original hierarchy, which keeps on imposing itself on the ressenting individual. The consequences of this reinforcement are explained in the next point.

- "[However, the] *ressentiment* experience is always characterized by [the] 'transparent' presence of the true and objective values behind the illusionary ones. […The] instinctive falsification of the world view is only of limited effectiveness. Again and again the *ressentiment* man encounters happiness, power, beauty, wit, goodness, and other phenomenon of positive life. They exist and impose themselves, however much he may shake his fist against them and try to explain them that way. He cannot escape the tormenting conflict between desire and impotence." (Scheler, 2003, p.36,47)

The reconfigured value hierarchy, Scheler argues, exists parallel to the original objective value system. The original positive values "are felt as such, but they are *overcast* by the false values" (p.36). The ressenting individual may achieve some level of gratification through his ressentiment delusion but this is a short term solution at best. He alleviates his pain by construing the illusory hierarchy of values but he cannot force other individuals to believe in the same. The rest of the world continues to operate on the original value system, constantly reinforcing it on the ressenting individual. The protesters at Wall Street may not desire wealth and power anymore, but they constantly see people reaping the perceived benefits

of these commodities. The ressenting individual is caught up in a repressive cycle in which the construed value system has to be reinforced over and over again, and with each reiteration the individual is reminded of his impotence and vulnerability.

This leads us to another interesting characteristic of ressenting individuals. Since the ressenting individual feels tormented in the presence of the original objective hierarchy of values, he "'transvalues' the idea of value itself by *denying* the existence of such an objective hierarchy" (p.103). What this implies is that the individual starts thinking that "your values (i.e. the values of those who are justified and 'good' according to the objective value hierarchy) are not 'more', not 'better' than our values (which we ourselves feel to be 'arbitrary' and 'subjective')" (Ibid.). It is this enforcing of subjectivity on the values of the world that make the ressenting individual dismiss all objectivity and proclaim that "*'All'* values are 'subjective'" (Ibid.). This nature of dismissing everything as subjective and arbitrary is another important characteristic of ressenting individuals.

Thus, we have seen that if the ressenting individuals are unable to affect a change with regard to the subject of their ressentiment, they get caught up in a recursive situation that constantly demands the reiteration of their illusory hierarchy. However, a person who entertains ressentiment delusion is "by no means completely unaware of [the] positive character [of the original values]" (p.35). The presence of the dominant original value system alongside the illusory one, and the long term inability to affect a change further worsens the ressenting individual's situation, leading him to subjectify all values.

With this argument, I conclude the discourse of actions. Table 2 summarizes the theoretical heuristics pertaining to the discourse of actions that have been presented in this section. Moreover, all of these – the motives for ressentiment, the rationalization of actions, and the consequence of the action – are in turn influenced by the other four discourses of means, social hierarchy, social outreach and social institutions. Some of the theoretical heuristics that will be presented in the next four sections have already been established in this section or in preceding ones. Nonetheless, each of these heuristics will be presented again within its discourse for the sake of clarity and structure.

The Discourse of Actions		
Ressentiment is always directed towards a particular subject, which is deemed responsible for the felt injury.	Long-term unfulfilled thirst for revenge is the most important source of ressentiment.	Certain social groups that are typically repressed due to cultural factors are prone to ressentiment.
The competitive urge, parallel to the feelings of envy and jealousy, fosters ressentiment.	For ressentiment to originate, the immediate reactive impulse must be blocked, and deferred to another time and to a more suitable place.	The inability to take immediate action is rationalized by the perception that the reactive impulse will be counter-intuitive and will lead to defeat.
The blockage to take immediate action makes the ressenting individual or social group feel vulnerable and impotent.	The perception of a sense of justice, accompanied by feelings of impotency and vulnerability, facilitates the act of ressentiment delusion that renders all values subjective.	The presence of the dominant value system alongside the illusory one coupled with the long term inability to affect a change worsens the ressenting individual's situation.

Table 2: Theoretical heuristics pertaining to the discourse of actions

The Discourse of Means

Means is a very generic term. It could refer to a set of equipments, a set of resources, or simply to a set of processes through which an individual takes an action to achieve a result. With regard to the discourse of ressentiment, I use the term 'means' to connote a particular process. Means, here, refers to the processes through which a ressenting individual discerns and affirms his convictions regarding the world around him.[20] An analysis of these processes can provide a nuanced understanding of the manner in which ressentiment is generative of a particular interpretation of the world. The two theoretical heuristics in this section deal with this process.

- "Whenever convictions are not arrived at by direct contact with the world and the objects themselves, but indirectly through the opinion of others, the processes of thinking are impregnated with *ressentiment*." (Scheler, 2003, p.41)

In this quote, Scheler explains a particular situation in which the thought processes in themselves are characteristic of ressentiment. This situation arises when the individual discerns his values and convictions not through direct contact with the concerned subjects but through his reliance on the opinions of others. To put it simply, the ressenting individual experiences all values not through direct contact with reality but through the validation of values by the opinion of other people – *what do they think of this?* The nature of this process is similar to that of ressentiment delusion. However, unlike ressentiment delusion, which is entertained by the individual on his own, this process of discerning values, and convictions, depends on the kind of people the individual interacts with. This process may aid the individual not only to discern his values and convictions but also to affirm the existing ones. When an average individual depends on the opinion of a ressenting individual, he may form his own convictions based on the illusory hierarchy of values that the ressenting individual has construed. Similarly, when two individuals that ressent the same subject share opinions, they will probably reinforce their individual convictions.

Furthermore, for these individuals, "the 'true' and 'given' is not that which is self-evident, but rather that which is 'indubitable' or 'incontestable'" (Ibid.). Although "[genuine] and fruitful criticism judges all opinions with reference to the *object itself*, […ressentiment] accepts no 'object' that has not stood the test of criticism" (Ibid.). Thus, for these individuals what works or what is true is not based on the result or the object, but instead on whether it can withstand the criticism. This is also one of the reasons that ressenting individuals can often provide substantive criticisms of the subject of their ressentiment, but they find it difficult to list an alternative solution. This is not to imply that their failure is in the absence of a practical alternative, rather the failure lies in the absence of even a reflection on what the alternative can be. Incessant criticism is thus another characteristic of these individuals. The ideology inherent in their thinking makes it difficult for them to conjure an alternative that can withstand all criticism.

This is the problem that the occupy protesters are also facing as of today. Žižek (2012) sums it up succinctly by pointing out "the fatal weakness of the protests: they express an authentic rage which is not able to transform itself into a minimal positive program of socio-political change. They express a spirit of

[20] However, it must be noted here that there is a second process that is of prime importance as well. This process concerns itself with the ways that facilitate the ressenting individual or social group's actions to affect a practical change in its compromised situation. This second process will be explained later in the discourse of social outreach.

revolt without revolution." Žižek goes further to hint at the possible failure of these protests by mentioning the need to think about an alternative: "it is not enough to reject the depoliticized expert rule as the most ruthless form of ideology; one should also begin to think seriously about what to propose instead of the predominant economic organization" (Ibid.). This absence of a reflection on alternatives is further fostered by that fact that these individuals have a tendency to negate all values. Let us see how.

- "He […who] sets out on life's journey with greater moral talents can through effort attain a higher level than the less gifted ones. But when the poorer and lower nature *cannot bear* this original distance from the superior one and *suffers* from the comparison, then this ungrudging ability to see and accept the better 'nature' […] is supplanted by an entirely different attitude! [Ressentiment] sets in, with the tendency to deny the moral value of this advantage. All value is now attached to 'work', which is supposed to raise the moral level." (Scheler, 2003, p.98)

Scheler here points out another characteristic of ressenting individuals: that they deny the subject, of their ressentiment, any moral high ground. Scheler bases this argument on the assumption that an individual who starts on his life's journey with greater talents or morals is likely to achieve a higher level through his efforts as compared to similar efforts of the less gifted individuals. However, when individuals are unable to cope up with this discrepancy between them and the successful individuals, they have a tendency to attach all value to the concept of work. This tendency is in turn fueled by the frequent social comparison facilitated by the fluid nature of social hierarchy. As I had explained earlier, when the people who are higher up in the social structure appear fallible and vulnerable, the average citizen perceives the nature of the values and abilities of these individuals to be relatively similar to his. The act of making social comparisons then becomes more feasible as the compared subject is not seen to have an inherent quality that makes him better. Thus, social comparisons are fostered by shifting the axis of comparison to focus not on the subjects' values and virtues but instead on the subjects' progress and performance within the fluid social hierarchy.

Furthermore, when all values and morals are reduced to the level of 'work', progress becomes a yardstick for the morals of an individual. An individual's ability is then reduced to the amount of work that he does and "the emphasis no longer lies on the evident objective *qualities* of value, but on the subjective process of work" (Ibid.). Since the individual is judged with regard to his work, his success is not attributed to a higher moral trait but instead simply to the nature and amount of work that he does. It is within this devaluation that the ressenting individual attains his gratification *('the successful is not gifted in any way')*. However, when all morals have been reduced to the level of work, the only relevant marker of success is the level of an individual in the social hierarchy. The heuristics of social hierarchy will be explained in the next section.

The Discourse of Social Hierarchy

Ressentiment has three major features: tendency to make social comparisons, feeling of powerlessness, and the perception of impotency. Each of these features is not only defined by the physical and mental attributes of an individual but also by his place in the socioeconomic hierarchy. Thus, the discourse of social hierarchy can provide an understanding of how particularities in the social hierarchy favor the three major features of ressentiment. The discourse of social hierarchy has two major heuristics

regarding ressentiment. Although each of these has been explained earlier in this chapter, I shall broadly sketch them out again for the sake of structure.

The act of making social comparisons becomes more feasible in the wake of a fluid social hierarchy. This fluid nature of social hierarchy coupled with a greater exposure to the private and public lives of successful social groups has been shown to foster the feelings of ressentiment because the individual is constantly entertaining comparison between himself and successful individuals. When we compare ourselves to others, "we recognize our own deficiencies, whether material, intellectual, spiritual, and we come to covet what others posses" (Abbott, 2006, p.18). Because of the plethora of media coverage, an average individual now has large amounts of information not only about the successes of the elite but also about their failures This nature of social hierarchy and the large amount of information foster social comparisons by shifting the axis of comparison to focus not on the subjects' values and virtues but instead on the subjects' progress and performance within the fluid social hierarchy. It is in the increasing frequency of these social comparisons that ressentiment finds more and more sources to originate. This leads us to our first theoretical heuristic concerning the discourse of social hierarchy: the fluid nature of social hierarchy favors the act of making comparisons, which is a characteristic element in the origins of ressentiment.

In contemporary societies, progress and achievement have become synonymous with the possession of capital and material assets and the individual is constantly trying to move up in the socioeconomic structure. There is increased competition amongst people, and progress translates into the act of outperforming others through commodities. Owing to the infinite possibilities rendered open by the capitalistic system, the economic categories are thus marked by high levels of socioeconomic discrepancy in terms of the commodities that each possesses. This discrepancy goes hand in hand with the democratic ideal of social equality. Thus, in this situation powerlessness, as explained in the discourse of actions, stems out from failed attempts to better one's perceived condition or to progress up in the socioeconomic hierarchy, even though all the individuals are perceived to be politically equal and to have the same set of values and resources.

The perception of impotency, on the other hand, is caused by the blockage to execute the reactive impulse and the inability to affectively modify the factors that are external to the ressenting individual. Every individual is granted the same set of rights that he can exercise, and the same set of means through which he can participate in the political governance of the nation. However, the individual increasingly finds it difficult to actively participate in the decision making process. This particular kind of situation, Scheler argues, favors ressentiment. This leads us to our second theoretical heuristic: ressentiment is strongest in a society where there is a high level of social discrepancy in the socioeconomic hierarchy, alongside political or social equality, and the individual increasingly finds it difficult to affect a change in the governance of social institutions.

However, the ressenting individual still lives in the same society and is constantly reminded of his social discrepancy and powerlessness. This painful situation demands relief. As we have already seen, one of the ways to achieve this on an individual level is through ressentiment delusion. However, it is only a short term solution that does not affect a change in the situation itself but only in the individual's perception of values. Another way of alleviating pain is to collaborate with other individuals that ressent the same subject and take collective action. This in turn depends on the social outreach of the ressenting individuals.

The Discourse of Social Outreach

The ressenting individuals may try and take actions by generating awareness to their cause and taking collective action against the subject of their ressentiment. With the term collective actions I refer to particular group actions such as organizing protests, strikes, activist demonstrations, and more. Such acts require the ressenting individuals to reach out and communicate to each other and to the wider public. Thus, these actions inevitably depend upon the heuristics of social outreach. However, to understand the heuristics of the collaboration of ressenting individuals it is important not only to explain how these groups come together but also to discern the nature of social groups that are prone to ressentiment – the social outreach of ressentiment itself. The first theoretical heuristic in this section deals with the former, while the second deals with the latter.

- "The man of *ressentiment* is a weakling; he cannot stand *alone* with his judgment. He is the absolute opposite of the type of man who realizes objective goodness against a whole world of resistance even when he is alone to see and feel it. Thus the '*generality*' or '*general validity*' of a judgment becomes his substitute for the true *objectivity* of value. He turns away from his personal quests for the good and seeks support in the question: What do you think? What do all people think? What is the 'general' tendency of man as a species?" (Scheler, 2003, p.103-04)

In the above quote, Scheler mentions that the ressenting individual finds it difficult to be left alone with his own judgments. We already know that the ressenting individuals have a tendency to discern and affirm their values through the opinions of others. Moreover, such an individual treats all values as subjective. Thus, for such an individual the only possible *objective* assessment is through the general validation of a judgment by others (*'see! Even he agrees with me'*). This nature of ressenting individuals is qualified by Scheler in the above quote and he asserts that instead of continuing with his quest for good and bad, the ressenting individual seeks to validate his convictions through the opinions of others.

However, the individuals around the man of ressentiment still discern and affirm their convictions through the dominant objective value hierarchy. Thus, when the ressenting individual tries to reach out for opinions, he constantly encounters *contradictions* until he meets another ressenting individual who believes in the same convictions. Whereas it is easy for two ressenting individuals to understand each other, two individuals with opposing values systems find it increasingly difficult to communicate. This shows that although the ressenting individuals and social groups constantly try to affirm their own judgments through the opinion of others, they "suffer from a blockage to communicate with others. They tend to come on slow and, if at all, they can hardly vent what keeps on plaguing them" (Frings, 2003, p.5). Thus, the theoretical heuristic that we can draw from this argument is twofold: the men of ressentiment are constantly trying to communicate and validate their judgments, but at the same time they find it difficult to articulate their convictions to individuals who still adhere to the dominant objective value system. Let us now move on to the next heuristic that deals with the nature of social groups that is characteristic of ressentiment.

- "In present-day society, *ressentiment* is by no means most active in the industrial proletariat […], but rather in the disappearing class of artisans, in the petty bourgeoisie, and the small officials." (Scheler, 2003, p.40)

I had mentioned earlier that the deprived nature of certain social groups provides a fertile ground for ressentiment. Although ressentiment can be found amongst powerful individuals, it is definitely a more common trait amongst the less privileged ones. This is the argument that Scheler makes in the above quote when he says that ressentiment is most active in the disappearing classes of artisans, in the petty bourgeoisie, and in the small officials. Each of these groups shares a common trait: they are all in a position where they are made to perform in a world which does not acknowledge their identity. The artisan is constantly trying to survive in the world where his work is not treated as mainstream; the petty bourgeoisie are failing to maintain their social status within the constantly redrawn socioeconomic hierarchy; and, the small officials have to obey their superiors and mostly remain anonymous throughout their lives. All of these traits signify the state of liminality that is associated with each of these groups. Each of these social groups is always in a state of liminality which is defined as a "transitional period […], during which [it] lacks social status or rank, remains anonymous, shows obedience and humility, and follows prescribed forms of conduct" (Dictionary.com, n.d.). Such behavior is usually associated with the social groups that are, as Scheler argues, prone to ressentiment. However, the liminal state of a social group is defined not only by their present condition but also by the opportunities and regulations imposed on them by their social institutions and these will be explained in the next section.

The Discourse of Social Institutions

We cannot emphasize enough the significance that political, cultural and economic institutions have on our lives. Each and every action that we take (or can take) is defined and limited by the social institutions in our society. These social institutions grant us certain privileges while forbidding us to act in particular ways. In short they sketch out the contours of our actions and define what we can, and cannot do. One of the major characteristics of ressentiment is the individual's inability to act out the reactive impulse. This blockage is not only defined by the physical and mental features of the individuals but also by the limits imposed on them, the rights granted to them, and certain particularities within the social institutions themselves. Thus, ressentiment inevitably draws on the discourse of social institutions within a society. Let us see how.

- "*Ressentiment* […is] strongest in a society […] where approximately equal rights (political and otherwise) or formal social equality, publicly recognized, go hand in hand with wide factual differences in power, property and education." (Scheler, 2003, p.28)

This point has ramifications not only for the discourse of social hierarchy but also for the discourse of social institutions. As explained earlier, the implied theoretical heuristic in this regard with respect to social institutions is that a society having an economic system marked by high social discrepancy, and a political system promoting social equality, has a strong tendency for ressentiment.

- "Impulses of revenge lead to *ressentiment* the more they change into actual *vindictiveness*, the more their direction shifts towards indeterminate groups of objects which need only share one common characteristic, and the less they are satisfied by vengeance taken on a specific subject." (p.27)

In this quote, Scheler is further qualifying the feature of ressentiment that was mentioned in the discourse of actions. I had shown earlier that when the revengeful individual reallocates responsibility from a particular subject to an abstraction, the act of revenge becomes even more difficult because then there is not *one* injurer but rather an entire social group, a circumstance or even the government who is

responsible for the wrongdoing. Scheler qualifies this difficulty of taking revenge by arguing that once the responsibility is reallocated to indeterminate groups of object – abstractions such as the government or capitalism – impulses of revenge are more prone to turn into ressentiment. Let us now move on to the last point that deals with the political dynamics within a society.

- "[E]very change of government, every parliamentary change of party domination leaves a remnant of absolute opposition against the values of the new ruling group. This opposition is [then] spent in *ressentiment* the more the losing group feels unable to return to power." (p.38)

Power, as I had explained earlier, is a relative term. Similar to ressentiment, powerlessness is only *powerlessness against*. The occupy movement groups feel powerless against capitalism, a soldier against the general, an inmate against the jailer, and as Scheler mentions in the above quote – the political opposition against the party in power. In the quote, Scheler asserts that the dynamics in the parliament with regard to party and electoral politics provide a rich ground for the cultivation of ressentiment. Different political parties have different agendas and value systems. Each of these political parties executes its own agenda when it comes to power. This leads to a situation where the opposition is rendered powerless in front of the decisions of the ruling party. In the political jargon of democracy this situation is explicated as *'what can we do, they have the numbers'*. In this situation, if the opposition feels that it is unable to return to power again, it becomes a victim to ressentiment. Scheler here builds on the relative nature of power and explains a particular situation in which we can discern this contextual nature. Even the members of parliament, who are considered the political elite, may harbor the feelings of ressentiment against the ruling party or the particular circumstance that prevents them from forming the government again.

Moreover, this point also hints at the passive aggression that sometimes stems out of ressentiment. These acts of passive aggression are borne out of a feeling of contempt towards subjects who reap the benefits of a situation that is deemed responsible for one's injury. As I had mentioned earlier, ressentiment is not characterized by a complete absence of actions but rather by the inability of the actions to affect a change. The opposition party does take a lot of actions: participating in parliamentary debates, critiquing the policies presented by the government, constantly doing press conferences, and more. Each of these acts of passive aggression against the government is marked by a feeling of contempt against the ruling party that is enjoying the liberties that the opposition desires. The ruling party, in itself, may *not* be the subject of the opposition's ressentiment. The subject of ressentiment may very well be the political situation in the country or the opposition's own party dynamics. However, the situation is perceived to favor or to be conducive to the plans of the ruling party and thus it becomes a subject of contempt and passive aggression – *'If we cannot enjoy the benefits, neither will they'*.

With this argument I conclude the theoretical heuristics of the five discourses pertaining to ressentiment. Table 3 summarizes and lists out the set of theoretical heuristics that have been established in the last five sections. Each of these heuristics sensitizes us to the nature and trajectory of ressentiment, and can help us to understand the dynamics of ressentiment in a society. By analyzing the discourse of means, social hierarchy, and social institutions we can discern whether the social, political, economic and cultural environment of a society favors ressentiment. The discourse of actions and social outreach, on the other hand, provide us with heuristics to understand the public expressions of ressentiment by social groups and particular individuals. With this I conclude this chapter; the next chapter will provide a

historical analysis of the Dutch case study and through the historicity of particular events trace out the rise of public discontent towards Islam.

Discourse of Actions		
Ressentiment is always directed towards a particular subject or abstraction that is deemed responsible for the felt injury.	Long-term unfulfilled thirst for revenge is the most important source of ressentiment.	Certain social groups that are typically repressed due to cultural factors are prone to ressentiment.
The competitive urge, parallel to the feelings of envy and jealousy, fosters ressentiment.	For ressentiment to originate, the immediate reactive impulse must be blocked, and deferred to another time and to a more suitable place.	The inability to take immediate action is rationalized by the perception that the reactive impulse will be counter-intuitive and will lead to defeat.
The blockage to take immediate action makes the ressenting individual or social group feel vulnerable and impotent.	The perception of a sense of justice, accompanied by feelings of impotency and vulnerability, facilitates the act of ressentiment delusion that renders everything subjective.	The presence of the dominant value system alongside the illusory one coupled with the long term inability to affect a change worsens the ressenting individual's situation.
Discourse of Means		
Ressenting individuals have a tendency to discern their convictions primarily through the opinions of others, instead of direct contact with concerned subjects.	Ressenting individuals deny the higher values that offend them. They only value 'work', believing that it is generative of morals in itself.	
Discourse of Social Hierarchy		
The fluid nature of social hierarchy promotes ressentiment through the facilitation of socioeconomic comparisons.	Ressentiment is strongest in a society where an individual finds it increasingly difficult to progress up in the socioeconomic hierarchy, and to affect a change in the decisions and policies of the government.	
Discourse of Social Outreach		
Ressenting individuals find it difficult to articulate their feelings to other individuals and thus try to collaborate with other ressenting individuals to organize protests and strikes.	The social outreach of ressentiment itself finds home in the liminality of certain social groups such as artisans, certain political groups, and economically, and physically, deprived social groups.	
Discourse of Social Institutions		
A society having an economic system marked by high social discrepancy, and a political system promoting social equality, has a strong tendency for ressentiment.	Revenge tends to be transformed more into ressentiment if it is directed towards an abstraction such as the political or economic institution.	The political opposition is a victim of ressentiment in circumstances where it feels unable to return to power.

Table 3: The theoretical heuristics of the conceptual framework of ressentiment

3

Disintegration: The Dutch Politics on Islam

> "I am obliged to speak. For the Netherlands is under threat of Islam. As I have argued many times, Islam is chiefly an ideology [- an] ideology of hatred, of destruction, of conquest. It is my strong conviction that Islam is a threat to Western values, to freedom of speech, to the equality of men and women, of heterosexuals and homosexuals, of believers and unbelievers. All over the world we can see how freedom is fleeing from Islam. Day by day we see our freedoms dwindle…That is why I have spoken, why I speak and why I shall continue to speak." (Wilders, 2011c)

Wilders uttered these words on the final day of his criminal trial. As I had mentioned earlier in the introduction, owing to his polemical remarks on Islam in the media, Wilders was accused of insulting ethic and religious groups, of inciting hatred, and of fostering discrimination. Wilders is the leader of the political party PVV and is now internationally renowned as the politician who has declared *jihad* on Islam (Abdullah Antepli, 2012). In the above quote, Wilders articulates that Islam is a threat not only to western values but also to the ideas of freedom and equality. In this chapter, I will show that such an attitude towards Islam is not just limited to Wilders, but rather forms the ideological core of a larger collective of anti-Islamic individuals and social groups in the Netherlands. I argue that individuals such as Wilders and others have been trying for a long time to, amongst other things, influence immigration and public policies to not only regulate the influx of Muslims in the country but also to expel people of Islamic descent from the country. I will also show that the target of criticism by such individuals is not merely the criminal or illegal activities of certain individuals but rather the inherent ideology within the religion of Islam.

To understand the anti-Islamic environment in the Netherlands we need to not only understand the country's political context but also analyze the prominent developments within Dutch society and politics that relate back to the social shaping of the Dutch critique on Islam. A brief analytical overview of the history of Dutch politics is then necessary not only to sensitize the reader to the Dutch sociopolitical landscape but also to provide an intuitive sense of the historicity of the Islamic debate within Dutch politics. The aim of this chapter is then to first provide a brief overview of the Dutch political system, and then to analyze the developments related to prominent anti-Islamic social and political figures in the Netherlands.

The nature and trajectory of the 'historical analysis'

Before I start introducing the Dutch political landscape, it must be noted that explicating a 'brief' introduction to the political history of a country is a tedious task, if not an impossible one. Amongst the choices that I had to make, there were two that clearly defined the nature and trajectory of such an overview. First, what is the purpose of such a historical introduction? The primary focus of this chapter is on the public expressions of criticism towards the religion of Islam and towards Muslim immigrants within Dutch society. Hence, the aim of this introduction is not to exhaustively describe the Dutch political history, but instead to sketch out the heuristics of Dutch politics that are related to the contemporary anti-Islamic environment. Therefore, the overview explains certain aspects of the nature

of Dutch politics that can help us to better understand the important anti-Islamic developments in the Dutch sociopolitical and cultural landscape that are analyzed later in this chapter.

Second, where does this history begin from? For the purpose of this research, I have marked the depillarisation of Dutch society, occurring in the 1960s, as the starting point for this overview. The rationale for choosing this is twofold: a) the depillarisation accelerated the rise of individualism in Dutch society and people became more autonomous and politically active as they became disassociated with the pillars (Lijphart, 1968; van Mierlo, 1986), and b) the depillarisation also facilitated the emergence of various new political parties, thereby significantly altering the Dutch political landscape (Dekker & Ester, 1996; Lijphart, 1968; Thung, Peelen, & Kingmans, 1982). The increased autonomy gave people more space and freedom to discern and rationalize their own convictions and ideologies, and the increase in the number of parties meant that multiple ideologies were heard and represented. As I have shown in the previous chapter, both of these points – the ability to discern one's own convictions and values and the existence of varying value hierarchies alongside each other – are crucial parameters for analyzing ressentiment. Thus, in broad sketches, this chapter will illustrate a history of Dutch politics from the depillarisation that occurred in the sixties to the success of Wilders in contemporary Dutch politics. The explicit analytical focus of this chapter is not so much on the history itself but rather on the prominent social and political figures that colored the Dutch social and political discourse with the anti-Islamic vernacular. However, before I begin we need to deal with a conceptual dilemma that is characteristic of almost all work that relates to the political understanding of Netherlands: the use of the term 'Populism'.

Populism: To label or not to label?

Populism is a thick and tricky concept. There are varying interpretations of populism within political science, sociology, philosophy and other disciplines, and there is hardly a consensus on what it really means (see Betz, 2002; Canovan, 1999; Kessel, 2010; Taggart, 2000; Vossen, 2010). It is sometimes treated as an ideology (e.g., Muddle, 2004), sometimes as a discourse (e.g., Hawkins, 2009), and some have even gone on to call it a syndrome (e.g., Wiles, 1969). Furthermore, there is an ongoing debate on the nature and impact of populism, leading to a lack of consensus regarding the role and significance of populism for the practice of democracy. Some scholars diminish populism to the level of an undemocratic pathological symptom (e.g., Bell, 2001; Betz, 2002), while some celebrate it as a part of democracy itself – a prescriptive and necessary challenge that can redeem democracy (e.g., Canovan, 1999; Kessel, 2010; Taggart, 2000; Vossen, 2010b). In any case, the term populism is now inextricably intertwined with the politics of Netherlands and is used by most of the commentators and political scientists to refer to the dynamics within Dutch politics.

However, owing to a lack of consensus over populism's definition, the concept has been applied in a varied manner. On one hand, there are scholars who ask the question 'is there populism?' and argue that Netherlands is definitely witnessing political populism (e.g., Betz, 2002; Kessel, 2010; Taggart, 2000). On the other hand, there are scholars who ask a different question – 'to what extent is there populism?' – and argue that Netherlands does not exhibit populism, per se, but only populistic instances which are not exact embodiments of populism itself (e.g., Vossen, 2010a; Žižek, 2011).

Furthermore, there is an increased emphasis on the contextual nature of populism and it is continuously stressed that to understand populism we need to critically analyze the local factors within which populism emerges (Canovan, 1999; Taggart, 2000; Vossen, 2010a; Žižek, 2011b). Thus, a focus on

Dutch populism necessarily demands a detailed description of the Dutch political environment and other contingent factors. Such an in-depth analysis is beyond the scope and relevance of this thesis. The aim of this chapter is to draw out the specific particularities of anti-Islamic Dutch politics related to the public expressions of criticism, rather than to analyze the concept of populism. Moreover, whatever be the nuances of populism, it is indeed clear that there is a lot of excess baggage attached not only to the concept itself but also to the nature, context, significance, and trajectory of populism within a democracy. Owing to this excess baggage, I have consciously avoided the explicit use of the concept of populism in this chapter and have restricted myself to the safer adjective: *populistic*.[21]

Although there are wide discrepancies in the definition of populism, authors are usually in consensus over its two defining features: a) the condemnation of the political elite, and b) the celebration of the will of the people (see Canovan, 1999; Kessel, 2010; Taggart, 2000; Vossen, 2010a; Žižek, 2011). The discourse of populism not only aims to denunciate the inept political elite but also prioritizes and glorifies the voice of the common public. Populists often claim to "speak for the 'silent majority' of 'ordinary, decent people', whose interests and opinions are (they claim) regularly overridden by arrogant elites, corrupt politicians and strident minorities" (Canovan, 1999, p.5). Thus, the use of the word 'populistic' in this chapter designates 'only' these two characteristics, unless otherwise explicitly stated. Now that the conceptual and empirical difficulty associated with populism has been discussed, I will move on to the section that explicates a brief overview of Dutch politics starting with the depillarisation in the sixties.

The Depillarisation of Netherlands: a Political overview

The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (MoECS) in its authoritative manual titled *Cultural Policy in the Netherlands* clearly states that the nineteenth century in Netherlands was marked with the conviction of "the nationalistic bourgeoisie [that] the population could be united intellectually and culturally" (MoECS, 2006, p.31). However, the parliamentary system was introduced in 1848, and "as democracy took hold, it became clear that the moderate Protestant upper classes had grossly underestimated or even ignored the religious and cultural diversity that existed in the rest of the population" (Ibid.). The Netherlands of nineteenth, and much of twentieth, century "was still far too divided for a national public culture of any substance to develop" (Ibid.). Thus, in 1862 the liberal prime minister Johan Rudolf Thorbecke proposed the cultural maxim – 'the government is not a judge of science or art' – and this implied that the "state should not, as a matter of principle, express any opinion on the content of the arts and sciences, nor decide what direction they should take" (p.32). As of today, this maxim still holds in the Netherlands and the government routinely follows the "practice of leaving judgments on the content of arts and culture to outside advisory bodies" (Ibid.).

Faced with the implications of the Industrial revolution, in the latter half of the nineteenth century Netherlands had to develop ways to deal with the modernization wave that confronted Dutch society with a large number of problems involving "changes in social and economic life, family life, religious and political culture, [and] communication" (Dekker & Ester, 1996, p.327). A wide array of "new technologies for disseminating information [emerged] at the same time as the standard of living

[21] I must stress that the 'avoidance' of the term does not imply that I completely disagree with the ascription of populism to Dutch politics (for an analytical overview of populism see Kessel, 2010; Taggart, 2000; Vossen, 2010a, 2010b). I completely agree that the Dutch political landscape is marked by populistic features. However, a focus on populism demands not only a different mode of research but also a different set of research data – both of which lie outside the scope of this thesis.

among the lower classes was improving" (MoECS, 2006, p.32). These technologies soon became victim to the strong religious ideologies that existed within the Netherlands. The new technologies were regarded "with suspicion [and the rise of mass culture was taken as] tangible evidence of the secularisation of society" (p.33). Obviously, the socialists responded by arguing "that a narrow entertainment culture was an obstacle to the advancement of workers" (Ibid.). Universal suffrage was introduced in the Netherlands in 1917 and the liberal parties finally lost their majority in the parliament to the denominational parties[22], which would remain in power for more than seventy five years (MoECS, 2006). Thus, Netherlands came to be ruled on the basis of a "Christian belief system" (p.33) as these parties "made strenuous endeavors to make their religious values accepted as universal rules" (Ibid.) by influencing virtually every segment of society. Thus, it was in "the mid 1920s [that] pillarisation took hold" of the Dutch sociopolitical landscape (Ibid.).

Pillarisation, or *verzuiling* in Dutch, "refers to a system of intentionally […organizing] vertical ideological segmentation […which exhibit] structural links between ideology and religious and secular world views" (Dekker & Ester, 1996, p.325). Each of these vertical ideologies was referred to as a pillar, which could be understood as an integrated network of organizations that share a similar culture and ideology (Hellemans, 1990 as referenced in Dekker & Ester, 1996). The pillars "were the prime *loci* of identification and socialization, and functioned as major agents for the intergenerational transmission of political culture" (Dekker & Ester, 1996, p.325) and at the same time also "shaped one's opportunities and experiences throughout life" (Semetko, 1998, p.140). Moreover, "the simple fact that you lived in your own pillar also made it a lot less necessary to have dealings with people from other pillars" (S. Koenis, personal communication, March 28, 2012). Each Dutch pillar "had its own organs and organizations – newspapers, magazines, publishers, leisure clubs, libraries, choirs, musical associations, and later on [even] broadcasting associations" (MoECS, 2006, p.33). Initially there were four pillars representing the Catholics, Protestants, liberal Protestants and Socialists respectively; however, the Broadcasting Time Decree of 1930[23] saw the establishment of a fifth 'general' pillar which was representative of the nation at large (Ibid.). This process of pillarisation "was to consolidate and expand for a period of over fifty years" (MoECS, 2006, p.33) until finally dying out in the 1960s.

The sixties saw the advent of pluralism within Netherlands which was evident through various factors. Policy documents started referring "cautiously to 'different lifestyles' or 'subcultures'" (p.38) and the government "stopped intervening preventively" (Ibid.) in various aspects of the society including mass media. Moreover, the Dutch citizens "no longer condemned expressions of other beliefs or lifestyles from the standpoint of the certainty offered by religious or political ideology" (Ibid.). This was also evident in the "decreased church attendance and religious voting, increased interdenominational marriages, as well as a support for denominational organizations" (Dekker & Ester, 1996, p.330-31). Personal taste was preferred and it was "recognized as the expression of the individual's sovereign,

[22] The term 'denominational' refers to the characteristic that these parties did not adhere to an established denomination or belief in terms of politics or religious ideology. Denominational parties could be in disagreement with either established political fractions or religious doctrines.

[23] The Dutch government started to censor and restrict the radio content in 1925 (MoECS, 2006). Initially, the radio was seen as "a technical and commercial affair, not a public one" (p.34). However, once the pillars realized that they could use the radio to disseminate information at large, "four new broadcasting associations started up" (Ibid.) representing the four pillars respectively. The radio controversy saw a fierce battle over the allocation of airtime, which soon became a tiff between "the 'neutral' and 'pillarised' camps" (Ibid.). It was as a solution to this problem that the 1930 decree led to the splitting of the radio airtime into five parts.

independent choice" (MoECS, 2006, p.38). The social control exerted by the pillars was thus weakened, thereby challenging the exclusivity of the connection between an individual and his respective pillar (Bax, 1988, as cited in Dekker & Ester, 1996).

The process of depillarisation not only mitigated the influence of tradition (and pillar ideologies) on an individual's ideological perceptions but also made an individual more politically active (Bax, 1988; Dekker & Ester, 1995, 1996; Lijphart, 1968; MoECS, 2006). Within such an environment an individual had to choose his own political affiliations (and not passively rely on the political ideology of the pillar) and this process of individualization was "accompanied by a process of political fragmentation which involves the disintegration of formerly coherent political profiles" (Van den Broek & Heunks, 1993, p.73, as cited in Dekker & Ester, 1996, p.332). Thus, post-1960 the Dutch society became highly secular and individualized, and political choice was "increasingly based on personal choice and less on tradition" (p.339). As of today, "political convictions in Dutch society are subject to a process of individualization through which pillarised beliefs […have been] replaced by personal preferences and values" (Ibid.). This rise of individualism, and subsequent weakening of the influence of the pillar ideology on the individual, characterizes two important points about Dutch society. First, people became increasingly autonomous and this led not only to the freedom of political choice but also to the freedom to discern one's own values and convictions through informed consent. Second, the disintegration of hard-lined political profiles implied not only that the old political establishments were weakened but also that new political voices were beginning to come up. This claim is further substantiated by the fact that the Dutch elections of 2010 witnessed as many as eighteen political parties competing for the Dutch parliament (European Election Database, 2010).

Before explicating the list of political parties in the Netherlands, it is important to mention here an apparent paradox that has bothered social scientists across the globe: how can such a segmented society that was marked by such strong pillars be at the same time an exemplary example of a successful and stable democracy? An answer to this paradox is provided by Arend Lijphart, a renowned political scientist, who has produced the seminal work on Dutch politics titled *The Politics of Accommodation*: *Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands*. Lijphart (1968) provides an explanation to this paradox by mentioning two distinct features of Dutch politics: a) the glorification of a sense of nationalism across the pillars whereby each member of a pillar feels a strong affinity to the country in addition to the pillar, and b) the concept of polder model characterized by political elitism in which each pillar accommodated for certain issues and conflicts with other pillars through consensus building.[24] These two parameters are crucial for the analysis of ressentiment within Netherlands. These imply that in addition to the individualization of ideological self-perceptions and the multiplicity of political ideologies, there is an overarching feeling of nationalism amongst Dutch citizens characterized by an attachment to the Dutch (and broadly to the western liberal) values. Moreover, the politics of accommodation – the polder consensus model – implies that competing ideologies and interpretations can definitely coexist within Dutch society even though they may only be representative of a minority. It is in such an environment that few anti-Islamic public and social figures could stand up and voice their criticism of immigration policies within Dutch society.

[24] Later, Lijphart expanded this research with other case studies and formulated the concept of 'consociational democracy' which has become a major landmark in the Dutch pillarisation research. For more information on this concept refer to: Lijphart (1977).

With regard to the issue of immigration, it is interesting to note that "during the 1990s, there was quite literally no immigration policy in the […Netherlands], and a laissez-faire, multicultural orthodoxy reigned" (Linklater, 2005). Post-1945, "decolonization, labor migration and forced migration contributed to a long period of net migration to the Netherlands" (Vink, 2007, p.339). After the Second World War ended, almost 300,000 Dutch citizens came back home after the liberation of the Dutch East Indies (1949) and New Guinea (1958) (Ibid.). Moreover, the number of asylum seekers in the Netherlands "escalated annually from 3,500 in 1985 to over 43,000 in 2000 – pro rata amongst the highest in the EU […and by] 2001, 46% of the population of Amsterdam consisted of first- or second-generation immigrants" [25] (Ibid.). Until a few years ago, Netherlands was hailed as a country "with an integration model that comes closest to the multicultural ideal-type in which the government endorses […] cultural diversity and actively supports the right of different cultural and ethnic groups to retain their distinctive cultural identities" (Vink, 2007, p.337). However, there has now been a seismic shift in this paradigm and the rise and fall of Dutch multiculturalism along with its repressive liberal policies of civic integration has been well documented (see Doomernik, 2005; Entzinger, 2003; Joppke, 2004; Vink, 2007). The line of critique can be traced back to 1991, "when Frits Bolkestein, then leader of the liberal party VVD,[26] publicly questioned the compatibility between Islamic and Western values" (Vink, 2007, p.338). This issue would then reemerge in the wake of the international exposure received by the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Centre in a more radical form through Pim Fortuyn, and would be analyzed later in this chapter.

Continuing the discussion on the state of Netherlands post-depillarisation, the denomination parties remained in power up until the 1994 elections, in which the conservative *Christen-Democratisch Appèl* (Christian Democratic Appeal, CDA) and the social-democratic *Partij van de Arbeid* (Labour Party, PvdA) lost a large part of their seats (European Election Database, 1994). The '94 elections saw the liberal *Democraten 66* (Democrats 66, D66) and the *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie* (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, VVD) gaining significant representation in the parliament (Ibid.). The government was finally headed by the coalition comprising of PvdA, D66 and VVD, and this formation is popularly known as the Purple Coalition. The color purple symbolizes the mixing of the 'blue' liberals with the 'red' socialists (RNW, 2010).[27] This coalition would stay in power for two terms until 2002 – the year in which Netherlands would see the rise of the populistic leader Pim Fortuyn who would vehemently criticize the Dutch immigration policy and the religion of Islam.

With this, I will now end my brief analytical overview of the Dutch political landscape and the next sections will deal with the analysis of few prominent populistic figures in the Netherlands who voiced their anti-Islamic agenda within Dutch society starting with Pim Fortuyn. Before moving on to the next sections, table 4 lists some of the major political parties in the Netherlands along with the percentage of votes received by each in the elections from 1994 to 2010.

[25] Even though the numbers are high, one must be cautious and not take them at face value as in the Netherlands, "an immigrant is classified as anyone with one or more parents born abroad" (Linklater, 2005).
[26] VVD is the acronym for the Dutch political party *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie* – commonly known as the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy
[27] RNW stands for Radio Netherlands Worldwide.

Dutch Name	*English Name*	*'94*	*'98*	*'02*	*'03*	*'06*	*'10*
Christen-Democratisch Appèl (CDA)	Christian Democratic Appeal	22.23	18.37	27.93	28.62	26.51	13.61
Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA)	Labour Party	23.97	28.98	15.11	27.26	21.19	19.63
Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD)	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy	19.96	24.69	15.44	17.91	14.67	20.49
Democraten 66 (D66)	Democrats 66	15.49	8.99	5.1	4.07	1.96	6.95
ChristenUnie (CU)	Christian Union	3.09	3.29	2.54	2.12	3.97	3.24
Socialistische Partij (SP)	Socialist Party	1.32	3.53	5.9	6.32	16.58	9.82
Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF)	List Pim Fortuyn	-	-	17	5.7	0	-
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Party for Freedom	-	-	-	-	5.89	15.45

Table 4: Performance (in % of total votes) of Dutch political parties in the Dutch Elections of 1994-2010[28]

Pim Fortuyn's assassination and the rise and fall of *'Lijst Pim Fortuyn'*

Wilhelmus Simon Petrus Fortuijn, popularly known as Pim Fortuyn, had been a relatively unknown figure in the Netherlands. He had acquired a doctorate in sociology and held a chair at Rotterdam's Erasmus University from 1991 to 1995 (Margry, 2003). However, at that time he was "more occupied with political questions than with scientific research" (p.107) and soon became a columnist with *Elsevier*, a weekly Dutch political magazine. It was through his articles in this magazine that Fortuyn began to slowly disseminate his political views and ambitions to the Dutch people. Later, he would publish as many as twelve books that would showcase his "idiosyncratic perspective on The Netherlands, the world and their social, economic and cultural problems" (p.108). As Fortuyn became more politically active, he started "to reckon with the possibility that perhaps someday it might yet happen" (Fortuyn, 1998, as cited in Margary, 2003) that he would be the prime minister of the Netherlands. This aspiration, coupled with his views on how Netherlands should be governed, raised a lot of attention not only from other politicians but also from the Dutch people.

In 2001, Fortuyn was appointed as the leader of a new political movement – *Leefbaar Nederland* (Liveable Netherlands) – however due to his controversial remarks on Islam he was forced to quit this position on February 9, 2002. With just over three months to go for the elections that year, Fortuyn decided to establish his own political party – LPF. The opinion polls prior to the election showed that LPF was gaining popularity because of the combination of "anti-establishment sentiments and discontent with immigration and multicultural society [in the party's ideology]" (Holsteyn & Irwin, 2003, as cited in Vossen, 2010, p.6). However, his strong views and ideologies helped Fortuyn to not only garner substantial support but also cultivate quite a few enemies. This became evident on May 6, 2002, when Pim Fortuyn was assassinated by Volkert van der Graaf, an environmental and animal rights activist. The country was left in a state of shock with "the first political assassination in the Netherlands in 350 years" (p.9) and although this incident casted a lot of doubt on the political stability of the country, the elections proceeded as scheduled and LPF participated with Fortuyn's posthumous

[28] Source: European Election Database (1994-2010)

candidature. However, these elections showcased quite a few surprises that would mark the beginning of a shift within the political of Netherlands.

The debutant LPF earned 17% of the votes in the 2002 elections and became the second biggest party in the parliament with 26 seats, while Fortuyn's previous party *Leefbaar Nederland* could only manage to win two seats. Surprisingly, CDA won the maximum number of seats (43), while the purple parties witnessed unanimous defeat. On July 22, 2010, Jan Peter Balkenende became the prime minister of the coalition government comprising of CDA, LPF and VVD. However, this success was a short lived affair and the coalition government lasted only for 87 days. Without its leader, LPF was disorganized and erratic. There were a lot of conflicts and arguments both inside and outside the parliament amongst LPF party members, leading up to the fall of Balkenende's first cabinet in October, 2002. Thereafter, LPF would lose half of its seats in the elections of 2003, and further dwindle to zero representation in the parliament in the 2006 elections. This rise and fall of LPF marks an important milestone in the political history of Netherlands (Vossen, 2010a). To understand what this incident implies for the larger political narrative, it is essential to explicate and analyze the political arguments and rhetoric of Pim Fortuyn.

Fortuyn was strongly opposed to the ruling political elites in the Dutch parliament whom he perceived as incompetent and inconsiderate (Kessel, 2010). Since the time he was the columnist for *Elsevier* he was "a fierce critic of the Dutch political elite [and portrayed them as] an almost inaccessible caste of professional politicians and *apparatsjiks* [apparatchiks] without any vision or real ambition, apart from retaining their own position"[29] (Vossen, 2010, p.6). He accused the ruling political elites of nepotism and gave them the nickname *Ons Soort Mensen* (Our Kind of People) to indicate their tendency to appoint "only members of the right parties in important offices" (Ibid.). Against this nepotism, Fortuyn advocated the "direct election of some official positions to break the monopoly of the old elite" (p.7). It must be kept in mind that Fortuyn was not criticizing the ruling elite simply for their inability to "listen to and follow the will of a superior people [but also for their inability] to lead and educate the people" (Ibid.). Fortuyn was not against elitism itself but instead argued that the job of the political leaders was also to coach the people on what is right and wrong. He lamented that "the Dutch elite had since the 1980s failed to fulfil their role as leaders and teachers and as a result the Dutch society had become 'orphaned'" (Fortuyn, 1995[30], as cited in Vossen, 2010, p.7). For Fortuyn, an ideal democracy was "a battlefield between unbounded, outspoken and daring political leaders and with the people as enthusiastic spectators" (Fortuyn, 1994, as cited in Vossen 2010, p.8). This vehement anti-elitist stance existed alongside Fortuyn's bashing of the immigration policies.

Fortuyn saw immigrants as a force that threatened Dutch society and he sought to "protect the Dutch liberal way of life against foreign cultural influences that clashed with the Dutch or, more broadly, with Western liberal Enlightenment values" (Akkerman, 2005, as cited in Kessel, 2010, p.13). On February 9, 2010, Fortuyn gave a controversial interview in *Volkskrant*, a Dutch daily, that led to his expulsion from *Leefbaar Nederland*. In this interview Fortuyn "qualified Islam as a backward culture"

[29] As an interesting side note, it must be mentioned to the reader that while Fortuyn was strongly against the ruling parties, he is supposed to have "at the same time secretly concluded a strategic 'non-aggression pact' with the Christian-Democratic party" (Wansink, 2004, as cited in Vossen, 2010, p.7).

[30] For more information regarding Pim Fortuyn's views on how a society should be governed, the Dutch reader should refer to his book *De Verweesde Samenleving: Een religieus-sociologisch tractaat* (The Orphaned Society: A religious-sociological tractate) published in 1994.

(Kessel, 2010, p.12) and argued the futility of Article One[31] of the constitution in the wake of the looming threat from Islam and immigrants. Fortuyn considered the "freedom of speech more important" (Ibid.) than the overflowing political correctness in the Dutch socio-political vernacular. Celebrating the metaphor of free speech, the LPF manifesto declared that "crowdedness in The Netherlands was causing growing tensions and it was therefore necessary to resist immigration" (LPF, 2002, p.5, as cited in Kessel, 2010, p.13). The manifesto went on further to discuss the "socio-cultural backwardness of large groups in society and the related crime problems [caused by these groups]" (Ibid.).

Furthermore, apart from the issues of crowded society and crime problems, Fortuyn saw an ideological disjuncture between Islamic and Western liberal values. He condemned certain Islamic acts "that [he deemed...] incompatible with desired integration and emancipation, such as honour killings and female circumcision, [...as] impermissible, [along with...] the discrimination of women in, especially, fundamentalist Islamic circles" (Kessel, 2010, p.13). Fortuyn validated his political incorrectness by nicknaming the nature of the existing public discourse as *Linkse Kerk* (Church of the Left-Wing). With this term, Fortuyn meant to point out the "alleged monopolisation of the Dutch public opinion by a leftist *intelligentsia*, who did not tolerate any criticising of their sacred cows, such as the welfare state, multiculturalism, development aid and a 'progressive' education" (Vossen, 2010, p.6). Anyone who was deemed to be critical or apprehensive of "the immigration policy and the growing visibility and influence of the Islamic minority in the Netherlands [was...] ostracized" (Fortuyn, 1998, 2002, 2004, as cited in Vossen, 2010, p.6). For the sociologist in Fortuyn, the terms – *Ons Soort Mensen* and *Linkse Kerk* – were not just nicknames but rather "provocative metaphors for [...] oligarchisation or group-thinking" (p.7).

Charged with hostility towards Islam and a will to bring about change, Fortuyn was not only clear and outspoken about his convictions but also determined to take actions on his own and through LPF. Moreover, the Dutch people were with Fortuyn and within a week after "the interview [that got Fortuyn expelled] was published, opinion polls showed that the LPF already exceeded […*Leefbaar Nederland*] in terms of electoral support" (p.12). Clearly, Fortuyn was quite popular amongst the Dutch people and he further emphasized the importance of the common man by showcasing his populistic struggle to make Netherlands into "a real lively democracy of and for the ordinary people" (Fortuyn, 2002, p.186, as cited in Kessel, 2010, p.12). This populistic appeal was not only driven by Fortuyn's stern views on social issues but also by his very personality. Fortuyn's elitist, flamboyant, and dandy-like style made him "fit very well in the media-frames, [thereby] making him a popular subject for both entertainment-shows as well as for political networks" (Kleijnnijenhuis, 2003, as cited in Vossen, 2010). This is further evident in the fact that during the 2002 elections campaign, Pim Fortuyn had the maximum share (24%) of news media coverage in the Netherlands, and this was not even close to the other candidates – the second highest being only 7.3% (Ibid.). Although these statistics do not prove that the people considered him credible or that they took him seriously, the percentages nonetheless substantiate the fact that he was popular amongst the people and enjoyed a fair share of media coverage. However, apart from Fortuyn's flamboyancy and extremist views, there was another factor that accelerated Fortuyn's news media coverage – his political assassination.

[31] Article One of the Dutch constitution prohibits the discrimination of any citizen based on his/her race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin.

As we have seen, in the prime of his career Fortuyn also faced a lot of social and political backlash because of his extreme opinions on Islam and immigration, and his expulsion from *Leefbaar Nederland* was only the calm before the storm. On May 6, 2002, van der Graaf shot down Pim Fortuyn in the parking lot of the radio station 3FM where Fortuyn had gone to give an interview. Three hearings and more than an year later, van der Graff confessed to the crime and said that "his goal was to stop Mr. Fortuyn [from] exploiting Muslims as 'scapegoats' and [to stop him from] targeting 'the weak parts of society to score points' to try to gain political power" (Pritchard & Clements, 2003). However, the assassination had already made an impact on the Dutch political landscape evident in the surprising rise of the debutant LPF and the electoral thrashing of the purple coalition. The assassination led to "an unprecedented outpouring of public emotions […in which] many expressed a sense of personal affinity [to Fortuyn]" (Margary, 2003; Van Herwaarden, 2005, as cited in Vossen, 2010, p.9). The media was filled with comments from people saying 'Fortuyn dared to say what they thought' – mostly referring to his extremist views on Islam or his anti-immigration stance (Vossen, 2010; Kessel, 2010). The political assassination of Fortuyn not only made him the populistic political hero who laid down his life for his beliefs but also made him the people's politician. These moral dynamics played into the elections of that year, making LPF the 2nd biggest party in the parliament in 2002 and a member of the ruling coalition.

However, in power and without its leader, LPF was as competent as a sinking ship. Balkenende's first cabinet proved to be "the shortest incumbent government in Dutch history" (Kessel, 2010, p.14) and fell within three months of its inception. The national elections were held again in 2003; however, this time the LPF, without the leadership of Fortuyn, was reduced to less than a third of its original parliamentary representation with only 8 seats. CDA emerged victorious yet again with 44 seats, and a close second was the PvdA with 42 seats. The new coalition government comprised of CDA, PvdA, and D66. Once again Balkenende became the prime minister and this second Balkenende cabinet was supposed to be in power until 2007. However, certain internal conflicts[32] led the D66 to prematurely withdraw its support to the coalition, forcing Balkenende to hand in the resignation of the cabinet in June, 2006 (The Economist, 2006a).

By this time, the LPF had already dwindled both in size and representation, and in the 2006 elections LPF participated with the new name *Lijst Vijf Fortuyn* (List Five Fortuyn, LFF) under the leadership of Olaf Stuger, a former LPF member. However, even with LFF's bizarre advertisements, which portrayed Stuger parachuting down from the heavens as a reincarnation of Fortuyn, the neologism proved futile and LFF only managed to gather 0.21% of the votes and could not gain a single seat in the parliament (European Election Database, 2006). Finally, on January 1, 2008, LFF was officially dissolved, marking the end of the short-lived *Lijst Pim Fortuyn's* legacy. With this we come to the end of this section on Pim Fortuyn and the rise and fall of LPF. In between the coming to power of LPF in 2002 and the dissolution of its sister party in 2008, there were two major incidents that also played a significant role within Dutch politics: Ayaan Hirsi Ali's criticism of Islam followed up with the assassination of the film director Theo van Gogh, and Rita Verdonk's call to strip Hirsi Ali of her Dutch citizenship. Both of these incidents will be discussed in the next sections before we move on to the analysis of the aftermath of the 2006 elections, and finally to the Dutch national elections of 2010.

[32] These conflicts will be explicated later in the section titled: "The 2nd Balkenende cabinet gets '*Verdonked*' by Iron Rita"

Ayaan Hirsi Ali's criticism of Islam

Ayaan Hirsi Ali was born in Somalia in 1969. She is the daughter of late Hirsi Magan Isse, who was the leader of the Somalian Salvation Democratic Front and a prominent figure in the Somalian revolution of 1986-92. Born in an unstable political environment, Hirsi Ali's childhood and teenage years were marked with transition and social problems. Magan Isse was imprisoned shortly before Hirsi Ali was born and it was not until 1978 that he was reunited with his family. At the age of five, while her father was imprisoned and her mother was away, Hirsi Ali was subjected to the orthodoxical tradition of *khafḍ* (female genital mutilation) by her grandmother (Linklater, 2005). Later, when the family reunited, they kept "moving from Saudi Arabia to Ethiopia and then, for 10 years to Kenya" (Ibid.).

While in Kenya, Hirsi Ali had the opportunity to study in some of the best schools in Nairobi. At that time, she became a devout Muslim and a staunch believer in the holy book Qur'an. She even "chose to wear the all-encompassing black Arab veil [*hijab*]" (The Economist, 2007) to school, and joined the local Islamic Brotherhood to promote the Qur'an way of life. Her belief in Islam was so strong at that time that while recalling the issuing of the *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie in 1989 for his book *The Satanic Verses*, Hirsi Ali stated: "[I] had heard that there was this book and the author had said something horrible about the Prophet, which was extremely blasphemous. And the first thought that came into my head was simply, 'Oh, he must be killed'" (Hirsi Ali, 2005, as cited in Linklater, 2005). Later, when she was forced to marry a Somalian Canadian by her father, Hirsi Ali fled to Netherlands while she was in Germany with her family to acquire the US Visa (Linklater, 2005; The Economist, 2007). It was in 1992 that Hirsi Ali received political asylum in the Netherlands. Although Hirsi Ali spent the first few years in Netherlands surviving on minimum wage small chores, she later obtained a degree in political science from the University of Leiden and got linked to the social-democratic PvdA (Linklater, 2005).

Clearly, Hirsi Ali's "life story has the drama of a good novel" (Abraham, 2011), but this is not where the story ends. Hirsi Ali soon realized that her love for Islam was not only extreme but also short lived. While she was in Netherlands, Hirsi Ali had the opportunity to read a large number of books that were previously unavailable to her. The books ranged from philosophical ones to the books on psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud. This knowledge exposed Hirsi Ali to alternative moral and ethical systems that were not based on religion, and soon she found herself getting disenchanted with Islam (Hirsi Ali, 2007). Furthermore, the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001 followed by Osama Bin Laden's outrageous video proclaiming that the attacks were beckoned by the verses in the Qur'an really disturbed Hirsi Ali. Suddenly for her, Islam transformed[33] from being the righteous way of life to becoming a "network of Muslims who are deeply wrapped up in their belief, [and] who walk around with intentions to kill innocent people" (Hirsi Ali, 2004a). Thus, Hirsi Ali, a Somalian political refugee, became one of the staunchest critics of Islam within Dutch society (Ghorashi, 2003; Snel & Stock, 2008).

It is important to keep in mind Hirsi Ali's political trajectory while trying to understand her critique of Islam. After Hirsi Ali finished her education at Leiden University, she got the opportunity to work "at the Wiardi Beckman Foundation [WBF], the research bureau attached to the Dutch Labor

[33] Shortly thereafter Hirsi Ali denounced Islam and became an atheist. While she was studying at Leiden University, she got highly influenced by the *Atheistisch Manifest* (Atheist Manifesto) of Herman Philipse, a professor there. It was this manifesto that hammered the final nail in the coffin and she renounced Islam and become an atheist (Choudhary, 2006)

Party (PvdA)" (Bosch, 2008, p.140). Post 9/11, Hirsi Ali became more politically active and started to voice a "strong criticism of multiculturalism […criticizing] its cultural relativistic tolerance of Islamic practice in a western context" (Ibid.). She regularly appeared on television and published many articles in which she not only criticized Islam and multiculturalism, but also "openly [criticized…] PvdA's lack of competence in dealing with domestic violence in immigrant communities"(Jusová, 2008, p.148). During the same time, Fortuyn (along with LPF) was dominantly in the news owing to his views on Islam and his criticism of immigration policy. When confronted with "Fortuyn's characterization of Islam as a 'backward religion', Hirsi Ali replied that 'by certain measures, including the treatment of women, Fortuyn's statement was not an opinion but a fact'" (Caldwell, 2005). Judging by her response it can be safely assumed that with regard to Islam, both Fortuyn and Hirsi Ali were in the same section, if not on the same page.

However, it also shows that Hirsi Ali was not the one who kick-started the Dutch debate on multiculturalism and integration; rather she got on the polemical bandwagon that had its origin "in the second half of the nineties when 'new realists' began to attack established politics and practices of integration" (Ibid.) and the same bandwagon on which Fortuyn was riding the waves. However, it was Hirsi Ali who imparted a different character to the debate by specifically focusing on the "oppression of Muslim women and the threat posed by the ever growing Muslim community to western values in respect of homosexuality and women's independence" (Ibid.). Needless to say, just like Fortuyn, she started gaining popularity, but at the same time also started receiving death threats (Bosch, 2008; Snel & Stock, 2008). Owing to the danger to her life, Hirsi Ali's friends pooled in money and sent her off to Los Angeles for some time (Traufetter, 2007).

In 2002 the first Balkenende cabinet came in to power following the untimely demise of Pim Fortuyn. It was in September 2002, a month before this government would fall, that the Deputy Prime Minister Gerrit Zalm persuaded Hirsi Ali to come back to Netherlands and become a representative of the VVD (Ibid.). Gerrit Zalm told Hirsi Ali that "only you have the moral authority to say the things that you say [and that in the Netherlands] we need immigrants in the immigration debate" (Zalm, 2002, as cited in Traufetter, 2007). By this time, stranded in Los Angeles, Hirsi Ali had started to believe that PvdA comprised of "adherents of multiculturalism on the one hand and Muslim conservatives on the other" (Hirsi Ali, 2002, as cited in Snel & Stock, 2008, p.117). Discontent with PvdA, Hirsi Ali joined VVD, won the 2003 general elections, and became a member of the Dutch parliament from 2003-2006. As a member of the second Balkenende cabinet, she "was assigned the portfolio for Emancipation issues" (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005, p.327). It was in this position as the member of the House of Representatives that Hirsi Ali got a new platform to voice her concerns over Islam.

After Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali became "the most prominent spokesperson for the 'multicultural backlash' in the Netherlands" (Ghorashi, 2003, p.167). She was "not only critical of the abuse of Muslim women but increasingly of Islam in general" (Ibid.). A prime example of this is her assertion that the prophet Muhammad is "a tyrant and a pervert in comparison to our modern Western values" (Hirsi Ali, 2003 as cited in Hirzalla & Aarts, 2005). Such a remark not only led to a backlash from the delegates and leaders of Arab countries but also led to an increased media exposure and she soon became one of the most popular and influential member of the VVD[34] within Dutch politics (de Leeuw & van Wichelen,

[34] As an interesting side note, it must be mentioned that the prime reason why VVD wanted Hirsi Ali to come back to Netherlands and join them was the fact that they particularly wanted someone with a higher moral ground and authenticity to

2005). But this was not where Hirsi Ali would draw the line, she went on to proclaim that "Islam is the new fascism" (Hirsi Ali, 2007 as cited in Cohen, 2007) and she even compared Hitler to the *Sharia* law to emphasize how Islam was a threat to the Dutch society and to the world at large (Ibid.).

Just like Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali saw the conflict between Islam and the rest of the world as a "conflict between 'universal' human rights and the theological rigidities of traditional religion" (Linklater, 2005). Criticizing the tolerance of Dutch people with regard to multiculturalism, Hirsi Ali retorts by demeaning "all the talk about respect for the identity of immigrants and their culture [...as] nothing but thoughtlessness, laziness and fear of openly addressing human rights violations" (Traufetter, 2007). She sees the immigrants as people who "exploit an open, liberal society to reach illiberal ends" (Henley, 2004) and the Dutch as people who "don't want to believe [that] Muslim women in the Netherlands are beaten and locked up in their homes, or that girls are murdered for holding hands with a non-Muslim boy" (Ibid.).

When asked about solutions to such problems, Hirsi Ali only puts down her foot more strongly. She demands "fundamentalist Islamic books to be banned [...and] Mullahs to be banished" (Ibid.), and wants the government to "close all 41 Islamic schools, put a break on immigration and change article 23 [of the Dutch constitution]" [35] (Linklater, 2005). In her critique of the Islamic community, she insists that the common belief "that the faith is inalterable because the Koran was dictated by God must be replaced" (Traufetter, 2006) and Muslims must realize that "it was human beings who wrote the holy scriptures" (Ibid.). Needless to say, Hirsi Ali's critique extends not only to Islamic practices but also to the tolerance of the Dutch people towards multiculturalism. It is no surprise that at that time, one of the most popular comments on the internet read: "[the] only man left in European politics is a woman" (User comment on Hirsi Ali, 2004b). However, it was in 2004 that Hirsi Ali got enormous international exposure because of the assassination of the Dutch movie director Theo van Gogh who had directed the anti-Islamic movie *Submission* – the screenplay and voice-over for which had been provided by Hirsi Ali.

Theo van Gogh's Submission

In 2004, Hirsi Ali became internationally renowned as "the writer of a controversial film on violence against Muslim women – Submission" (BBC, 2006). *Submission* is about "a Muslim woman in a see-through *burqa* telling a story of abuse within her marriage; she has text from the Koran condoning family violence written on to her naked body" (The Economist, 2004). These texts referred to the submissive and subordinate role of women within Islam (Choudhary, 2006). The movie consists of three main sequences. In the first sequence, "'All praise to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds,' says the text that scrolls across the actress's throat and down her breasts: the *fatiha*, or opening of the Koran" (Henley, 2004). Another sequence portrays "a Muslim woman who is forced into an arranged marriage, abused by her husband, raped by her uncle and then brutally punished for adultery" (Ibid.). In the third and last

represent them in the immigration debate (Traufetter, 2007). Owing to the electoral debacle in the 2002 elections, VVD wanted to regain the votes it had lost against the anti-immigrant LPF, and thus Hirsi Ali's outspoken criticism of Islam was "strategically instrumentalized within the new election-campaign of the VVD" (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005, p.337).

[35] Article 23 of the Dutch constitution deals with the freedom or the right to education and is in accordance with the pillar structure that existed in Dutch society. In 1917, there was a conflict between secular and religious parties within the Netherlands and this led to an event which is commonly known as 'the pacification of 1917', in which the article 23 was modified to provide equal and impartial government funding to both secular (public) and religious (private) schools, amongst other things. When asking for a change to article 23, Hirsi Ali explicitly wanted the government to withdraw funding for the Muslim private schools in the Netherlands (Linklater, 2005)

sequence, "a woman's bruised and beaten shoulders are covered with lines from verse 34, chapter 4 of the Koran: 'Men are the maintainers of women because Allah has made them excel'" (Ibid.). To put it succinctly, the film is a short, yet highly provocative, summary of Hirsi Ali's critique of Islam.

The film was directed by Theo van Gogh, the great-grandson of Vincent van Gogh, "who, as well as having made a dozen feature films in his 25-year career, was also a much-loved, deliberately provocative and often obscene columnist and pamphleteer who published numerous indictments of an over-radical Islam in an over-tolerant Netherlands" (Ibid.). The film was broadcasted on Dutch national television in August, 2004, and created a big social and political storm both within and outside the Dutch borders. Owing to Fortuyn's legacy and 9-11[36], the Dutch society was already in a state of turmoil and in the middle of all this "insisting on their right to speak freely and with the support of many Dutch people, Hirsi Ali and Van Gogh scattered their sparks – a blistering critique of Islam – with magnificent disregard for the feelings they might be offending" (Ibid.). The backlash was severe, if not unprecedented. On November 2, 2004, Theo van Gogh was "slain by a suspect whom police […] described as an Islamic fundamentalist with terrorist ties" [37] (Ibid.). He was shot several times by "a 26-year-old man with joint Dutch and Moroccan nationality" (Ibid.). Thus, in 2004, Netherlands "which had long prided itself on its tolerant, [and] liberal values" (The Economist, 2004) witnessed the second political assassination within a span of three years.

Following the murder, there was a huge outcry within Dutch society and "there were attacks on mosques and Islamic schools which [then] required special safety measures" (Brinks, 2005, p.6). The government labeled the murder as an "act against freedom of expression" (Ibid.). Mr. Balkenende, the Dutch prime minister, said that "the brutal killing of van Gogh […] by a Moroccan-Dutch terrorist was a grave assault on freedom of speech and Holland's tolerant way of life" (Balkenende, 2004, as cited in Pritchard & Clement, 2004). Mr. Piet Hein Donner, the then Dutch justice minister, asserted that the assassin "acted out of radical Islamic fundamentalist convictions […] and had contacts with a fundamentalist group that was under surveillance by the Dutch secret service" (Donner, 2004, as cited in Henley, 2004). Moreover, the Dutch media constantly highlighted the fact that Mohammed Bouyeri, the assassin, had close ties with Samir Azzouz, an 18-year-old Muslim of Moroccan origin who [was…] awaiting trial on charges of planning terrorist attacks on targets including a nuclear reactor and Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport (Henley, 2004). The case was complete: Islamic fundamentalists had displayed their intolerance through an attack on one of the most upheld virtues of western liberal society – the freedom of free speech. Hirsi Ali was shocked and dismayed at the death of van Gogh not only because her fears of Islamic intolerance were now being materialized but also because "in a note he pinned to his victim's chest with a knife, Bouyeri [had] also threatened to kill Hirsi Ali" (Traufetter, 2007). Hirsi Ali soon found herself surrounded by even more bodyguards and living in unknown locations for her own safety (BBC, 2006; Linklater, 2005). It was in the middle of this conundrum that the Dutch immigration officer, Mrs. Rita Verdonk, found a new vantage point to come down hard on Islam and Muslims.

The 2nd Balkenende cabinet gets '*Verdonked*' by Iron Rita

Maria Cornelia Frederika Verdonk, commonly known as Rita Verdonk or as Iron Rita, was a member of VVD who served as the Minister for Integration and Immigration in the second and third Balkenende

[36] From here on, the term '9-11' refers to September 11, 2001.
[37] It is interesting to note that "van Gogh was murdered exactly 911 days after Fortuyn" (Rovers, 2004).

cabinet. Like Pim Fortuyn, Rita Verdonk "constantly […framed] Dutch politics as a conflict between a corrupt political elite and a virtuous people" (Vossen, 2010b, p.30) and her main aim was to "establish a new national unity – 'make sure that we will all be proud of the Netherlands again'" (Van Zoelen, 2008, as cited in Vossen, 2010b). Following the murder of van Gogh, she linked the murderer "to Islam in general, framing Islam as a violent or backward religion" (Hajer & Versteeg, 2009, p.7). In an attempt to control the threat of Islam, she "unveiled plans for a law allowing the deportation of Islamic radicals even if they […were] Dutch citizens" (Pritchard & Clement, 2004). Moreover, Iron Rita also wanted to "deport 26,000 rejected asylum-seekers as soon as possible and [to] further limit immigration [in the Netherlands]" (Deutsche Welle, 2006). In her bid to make compulsory a Dutch language and culture test for immigrants wanting to attain Dutch residency, she stressed that "what is important is that foreigners who want to permanently reside in the Netherlands use Dutch as the language of communication" (Ibid.). However, an incident would mark the start of the decline of Verdonk's political career in the VVD – her attack on Hirsi Ali's Dutch citizenship.

In 2006, a documentary broadcasted on the Dutch national television showcased certain awkward facts about Hirsi Ali's past. The documentary showed that "[on] arrival in the Netherlands, […Hirsi Ali had] lied about her age and name, and gave (as she puts it) a partially fabricated story to boost her asylum claim" (The Economist, 2005). Although the claims were already made public by Hirsi Ali, Iron Rita thought otherwise. She criticized Hirsi Ali and wanted the government to "withdraw […her] citizenship" (Vossen, 2010b, p.32). Following this conflict, Hirsi Ali resigned from the House of Representatives and her Dutch political career came to an abrupt end with "a dramatic but dignified public statement" (The Economist, 2005). Strangely enough, the political storm that ensued made Verdonk decide a few days later to take "a major U-turn and […assert that] Ms Hirsi Ali could keep her Dutch citizenship" (BBC, 2006). However, it was too late to change things now and although Hirsi Ali did take back her Dutch citizenship, she "announced that she would head for the more congenial atmosphere of America" (The Economist, 2005).

Since then, Hirsi Ali has been living in the United States and is increasingly more upfront with her opinions on Islam and has featured in a large number of television shows (Abraham, 2011). She continues to write a number of articles in both print and online media (Abraham, 2011; Bosch, 2008; Snel & Stock, 2008) and has often been portrayed as the 'authentic insider' providing an 'honest' critique of Islam and its practices (Jusová, 2008). She is also the author of several books including *De Zoontjesfabriek over vrouwen, Islam en integratie* (The Son Factory: About Women, Islam and Integration, 2006), *De Maagdenkooi* (The Caged Virgin, 2006), her autobiography *Mijn Vrijheid* (Infidel, 2007), and her latest book *Nomad: From Islam to America – A Personal Journey Through the Clash of Civilizations* published in 2010. Although her books and articles deal primarily with the ill-treatment of women in Islam, Hirsi Ali generalizes this claim based on her own experiences and states that "Islam is not just a belief it is a way of life, a violent way of life. Islam is imbued with violence, and it encourages violence" (Hirsi Ali, 2010, p.201). Not only is she outspoken about her beliefs but also well received by her readers and all of her books have been translated in various languages in addition to appearing on numerous best-selling lists of newspapers such as The New York Times and other major publication houses across the globe (Griswold, 2012; Milani, 2008). Furthermore, over the years Hirsi Ali has won numerous awards by think tanks, peace foundations, and by literary and journalism establishments (Choudhary, 2006). In 2005, TIME magazine included her in the list of the 100 most influential people (Time, 2005) and as of today,

Hirsi Ali continues to be a major critic of Islam. However, when Hirsi Ali left for America, things started to look grim for Iron Rita.

Verdonk's political attack on Hirsi Ali was not well taken by the Dutch parliament. Moreover, the fact that she later changed her decision only made matters more complex for the second Balkenende cabinet. The political party D66, which was a member of the ruling coalition, supported a call for a vote of no confidence against the government later that year (Clements, 2006). Following the rejection of the bill of no confidence, D66 "pulled the plug on its support for the government" (The Economist, 2006b) and this led to the premature fall of the second Balkenende cabinet in 2006. An interim third Balkenende minority cabinet, comprising of CDA and the newly formed PVV, was meanwhile installed in the parliament before the new elections were to take place (Bickerton, 2006). As Netherlands geared up for the next general elections, "the debate about immigration in the Netherlands […became] increasingly tense" (Choudhary, 2006). Nonetheless, it was once again CDA that formed the government with the fourth Balkenende cabinet comprising of CDA (26.5%), PvdA (21.2%), and the ChristianUnion (4%) (European Election Database, 2006).

Furthermore, the 2006 elections also showcased a unique event in Dutch politics. Rita Verdonk "won more votes (640,000 in total) in the general elections […in] November than the 'socio-liberal' Rutte" (NIS, 2007). Mark Rutte was the leader of the political party VVD. It was the first time that in the Netherlands "the front-runner of a party was 'beaten' by his runner-up" (Ibid.). This incident, although seemingly strange, can be logically understood within the political context of the Netherlands. Following the murder of Fortuyn in 2002 and van Gogh in 2004, the Dutch fears over the compatibility of Islam with Dutch society reached their peak during the period leading up to the 2006 elections. On one hand, "voters appear[ed] to like the strict, zero-tolerance migration controls which […Verdonk had] pioneered [and on the other hand] more now accept[ed] the need for 'multiculturalism' of the kind Ms Hirsi Ali abhor[ed] as a price for social peace" (The Economist, 2006b). Needless to say, the people were with Rita Verdonk. Later, following a row over her attempt to become the leader of VVD and her umpteen criticism of the VVD party leader, she was expelled from the party in September, 2007 (NIS, 2007).[38] She later formed her own political party - *Trots op Nederland* (Proud of the Netherlands, ToN).

ToN's political ideology was similar to the programmes of Fortuyn and was "dominated by issues related to crime and security, and claims for lower taxes and a smaller, more efficient bureaucracy" (ToN, 2008, as cited in Kessel, 2010, p.18). Although the word Islam was never mentioned in ToN's manifesto, Verdonk emphasized the "need to preserve Dutch culture" (Kessel, 2010, p.18). Although Verdonk wanted to prevent "the entry of economic 'fortune seekers'" (Ibid.), she noted that "the Netherlands does need skilled immigrants" (ToN, 2008, p.4, as cited in Kessel, 2010, p.18). However, highlighting the threat to Dutch norms and values due to the immigrants, Verdonk mentioned in an interview that "if you come and live here, you ought to adapt to the prevailing Dutch culture" (Verdonk, 2008, as cited in Kessel, 2010, p.18). Rita Verdonk was totally convinced that "she could solve all the problems the elite was not able to solve such as the traffic jams, the high levels of criminality and immigration and the waiting-lists in health care" (Visie, 2008; Wynia, 2008; as cited in Vossen, 2010a). However, such a subversive critique, disguised by acute levels of political correctness, did not fare well with the outspoken Dutch public that already saw Fortuyn and Hirsi Ali as political heroes. ToN could not fare well in the general elections of 2010 (Vossen, 2010b). Although Rita Verdonk later retired from

[38] NIS stands for Netherlands Info Services.

mainstream politics, ToN now continues as a political party, under the name of *Democratisch Politiek Keerpunt* (Democratic Political Turning Point, DPK), without its founding leader and has no representation in the parliament. It might appear as a paradox to the reader that unlike LPF, ToN with its hard, albeit subversive, stance on immigration and integration could not gather substantial public participation even with Verdonk's political presence. However, this was not because Netherlands was slowly cuddling up to its old tolerant self, instead there was another new founded political party that was far more explicit and harsh than LPF or ToN in its criticism of Islam – this was the right-wing party PVV led by Wilders.

Geert Wilders and the *'Partij voor de Vrijheid'*

Wilders is a former member of the VVD who left the party in 2004 owing to "a conflict with the parliamentary leader over the issue of Turkish EU membership" (Kessel, 2010, p.15). Refusing to give up his seat in the parliament, in 2005 Wilders formed a "one-man fraction – Group Wilders, or, as he later labeled it, Freedom Party (PVV)" (Ibid.). Although Wilders was initially only against radical Islamic groups, since 2003-04 he has openly criticized "Islam *tout court* as a totalitarian ideology (instead of a religion), which [according to him] should be placed on the same level as communism and fascism" (Vossen, 2010b, p.26). Along the same lines as Hirsi Ali, he often uses the term 'Islamofascism' to signify the nature and severity of the threat posed by Islam, and often compares the Qur'an to Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (BBC, 2011; Vossen, 2010b). Wilders is also often compared to the likes of Fortuyn and Verdonk, and owing to the threat to his life he is under permanent protection and has been living at different addresses since 2004 (Wytzes, 2007; Blok & Van Melle, 2008; as cited in Vossen, 2010b). Owing to his political prowess, Wilders was voted as the best politician in 2007 by the Dutch political press (BBC, 2011). Labeling himself "intolerant of the intolerant" (Ibid.), Wilders demands, amongst other things, the "deportation of Muslim immigrants […from Netherlands, and] a special tax on headscarfs [*burqa*]" (Buruma, 2010). As of today, when Netherlands is gearing up for another round of early elections later this year, Wilders remains the key political figure who will play a decisive role in the future of Dutch politics (Buruma, 2010; Kessel, 2010; Steinglass, 2011; Vossen, 2010b).

Wilder's PVV debuted in the 2006 Dutch elections "as the main heir of the Fortuyn legacy" (Vossen, 2010a, p.10) and secured 5.9% of the votes with 9 seats in the parliament (European Election Database, 2006). However unlike LPF, which dwindled after its first election success, PVV went on to become the third biggest party in the 2010 elections with 15.5% of the votes and 24 seats in the parliament (European Election Database, 2010). On the other hand, the 2010 elections were disastrous for CDA, which lost half of its votes and witnessed a stark reduction in its parliamentary representation (Ibid.). The winner was the liberal VVD which secured 31 seats in the parliament, just one seat over PvdA (The Economist, 2010). It must be noted that around this time, Europe was gearing up for the economic crisis coming across the Atlantic, and one of the prime reasons that marked VVD's rise in the parliament was its austere stance on budget-cuts and its pro-business mandate (Cendrowicz, 2010). Moreover, Wilder's rise was also not an abrupt surprise because the June, 2009, elections for the European Parliament had already showcased PVV coming out as the second biggest party after CDA, making it clear that populistic parties would not go down that easily (Kessel, 2010).

Although the Dutch elections took place in June, 2010, it was only four months later in October that the minority coalition government comprising of CDA, VVD, and PVV, was formed with Mark Rutte as the prime minister of Netherlands (Cendrowicz, 2010). Although PVV did not get "ministerial

representation in the government [, Wilders] agreed to prop up the Rutte's minority government" (Ibid.), in exchange for the government's "harder line with immigrants and Muslims" (Ibid.). However, Rutte's minority coalition only lasted for 558 days and fell in April, 2012, after Wilders refused to accept Rutte's "austerity demands to bring the budget deficit in line with EU rules" (BBC, 2012). As of today, Netherlands is slowly inching towards the 2012 parliamentary elections to be held later this year.

Moving into the Wilderness

Geert Wilder's critique of Islam and immigration, along with the empirics laid down in this chapter regarding Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali, van Gogh, and Verdonk, will be analyzed through the theoretical heuristics of ressentiment in the next chapter: *Ressenting Islam: the Wilderness of Netherlands*. In this chapter, I have provided a brief analytical overview of Dutch politics to sensitize the reader to the Dutch sociopolitical and cultural landscape. Moreover, in this chapter I have also explained in detail the political critique provided by prominent social and political figures in the Netherlands that played an important role in the social shaping of the Dutch public opinion of Islam. Through this chapter I have provided an intuitive understanding of the nuances of Dutch politics with regard to the thriving anti-Islamic vernacular within Netherlands. The next chapter will provide a detailed inquiry as to how "the Netherlands has swung from blithe open-door immigration to anxious protectionism" (Linklater, 2005), characterized by a societal presence of ressentiment towards Islam.

4

Ressenting Islam: The Wilderness of Netherlands

> "Radical right-wing success at the polls, at least in the initial phase of mobilization, depends largely on a party's ability to exploit existing popular *ressentiments*. […] More often than not, the initial success of these parties […reflects the] grievances and feelings of discontent generated […] by official elite-sponsored policies, such as affirmative action programs and the promotion of multiculturalism. [… This] populist appeal to *ressentiments* […challenges] the established elites and their values in order to devalue the latter as a basis for legitimacy." (Betz, 2002, p.205)

Hans-Georg Betz, while analyzing the success and failure of right-wing political parties in democracies, points out the significance of the ability of a right-wing party to exploit and mobilize existing ressentiments within the electorate. In the above quote, Betz asserts that the initial success of such parties is indeed representative of the public discontent towards elite-sponsored policies such as that of multiculturalism. Moreover, he also points out that such a right-wing populistic critique of the establishment is legitimized by denigrating the values of the ruling elite. The previous chapter showed that the Dutch political landscape is marked by the rise of populistic right-wing parties such as LPF and PVV that voice strong critiques of the immigration policies, the societal goal of integration and tolerance, and the compatibility of Islam with the western liberal way of life. In this chapter I will argue that the success of Dutch populistic parties, and the rise of individuals such as Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali, and Wilders, is indeed symptomatic of the ressentiment towards Islam amongst certain individuals and social groups in the Netherlands. Analyzing the empirics laid down in the previous chapter and by explaining further the critique of Geert Wilders, I will also show that such a populistic appeal to ressentiment leads to, what Scheler calls, ressentiment delusion – a denigration of the elite establishment by devaluing their aspired goals of tolerance and multiculturalism.

The analysis in this chapter will be based on the understanding of the discourse of actions, means, social hierarchy, social outreach, and social institutions. Using the set of theoretical heuristics on ressentiment from chapter two, I will show that certain anti-Islamic individuals and social groups within Netherlands indeed exhibit symptoms of ressentiment towards the ideology of Islam. The goal of this chapter is then to employ the set of heuristics from the second chapter and show how the Dutch sociopolitical and cultural landscape is indeed characterizes by the symptomatic emergence and fostering of ressentiment.

Geert Wilders' critique of Islam

Before I begin the analysis of ressentiment, I will broadly sketch out three important pointers with regard to Geert Wilders and his critique on Islam. The first focuses on the very nature of Wilders' criticism. The second deals with the form and content of the anti-Islamic movie made by Wilders.

Finally, the third pointer deals with Wilders' political stance in the election campaign of the upcoming elections of 2012.[39]

Wilder's overarching criticism: 'I don't hate Muslims, I hate Islam'

Similar to Fortuyn and Verdonk, Wilders also has an anti-elitist populistic stance and in his 'declaration of independence' he clearly states that he does "not want this country to be hijacked by an elite of cowardly and frightened people […and instead he wants] to return this country to its citizens" (Wilders, 2005, p.2, as cited in Kessel, 2010, p.15). Considered by his peers as one of the most radical politicians, Wilders often talks about "the 'Islamization' of the Netherlands and a 'tsunami of Muslims'" (Bos & Brug, 2010, p.782) and claims that "democracy and Islam are irreconcilable" (Wilders, 2004, p.65-66, as cited in Vellenga, 2008, p.28). Referring to the dawn of Islamofascism in Europe, Wilders compares the Qur'an to Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and wants it to be censored to a great extent, if not completely banned (Buruma, 2010). To put it succinctly, Wilders perceives Islam as a "sick cancerous ideology" (Wilders, 2008c) and strongly asserts that "Islam is not [a] part of our culture, should never be, and will never be" (Wilders, 2008a). By delineating the ideology of Islam (rather than radical Islamists or terrorists) as the enemy, Wilders casts the whole religion as a European outsider. Moreover, through the metaphor of cancer Wilders not only reasserts the otherness of Islam but also hints at the incompatibility between Islam and the western liberal way of life.

Labeling abortion rights, euthanasia, and gay marriage as hard fought Dutch values (Vossen, 2010b), Wilders retorts to cultural relativists by claiming that the "Western – and thereby the Dutch – culture is light-years ahead of the Islamic culture in political, economic, military, scientific, social, cultural, and moral respect" (Wilders, 2007, as cited in Vellenga, 2008, p.30). He goes on further to say that "Islam, as such, is a threat […and] a violent barbaric ideology" (Wilders, 2008a). Moreover, denouncing contemporary politicians as inept and ignorant, Wilders believes that these politicians are "selling out to the enemy – which is Islam – [and] selling out […Europe's] culture and identity" (Ibid.). In relation to dominant Dutch values, Wilders remarks that he is all for Dutch tolerance "provided [that] it excludes Islam" (Kahn, 2011, p.9). With regard to possible solutions to such a situation, Wilders not only demands that the Qur'an be banned but also wants the troublesome Muslim immigrants in Netherlands to be deported if they have a double nationality (Kessel, 2010; Vossen, 2010b). Clearly, for Wilders radical Islamists or terrorists are not the only problem, rather for him the entire ideology of Islam is incompatible not only with the Dutch (and western) way of life but also with democracy at large. Later, in 2008 Wilders presented his critique of Islam in a film titled *Fitna*.

The anti-Islamic movie 'Fitna'

It was in March, 2008, that Wilders released the controversial short-film *Fitna*, aiming "to shed light on the threat allegedly posed to the Netherlands and the West by Muslim immigration and the global growth of Islam" (Zoonen, Vis, & Mihelj, 2011, p.613). The Dutch broadcasters straightaway refused to show the movie[40] and *Fitna* was then released "through a video sharing website (LiveLeak) on the internet" (Zoonen, Vis, & Mihelj, 2010, p.249). However, the film was later "retracted [from LiveLeak,

[39] The acquittal of Wilders in the criminal trial against him is also an important pointer. However, I have chosen to discuss it separately within the section on the discourse of actions.

[40] It must be noted at this point that a small Dutch Muslim TV station had later offered to broadcast the film *Fitna* after all other broadcasting networks refused to telecast it. However, it is said that Wilders turned down that offer and released the film online (Buruma, 2009).

and] then posted on YouTube subtitled in different languages" (Blaagard, 2010, p.8). This anti-Islamic movie "contained verses from the Quran, cut with footage of the terrorist attacks in New York and Madrid, [and had] fragments from [other] notorious anti-Islam films" (Zoonen, Vis, et al., 2010, p.249). Moreover, it also contained "images and statistics suggesting the Islamization of the Netherlands and Europe" (p.249-250). To put it succinctly, "[using] shocking images of terrorist attacks, women's oppression, homophobia and antisemitism, interspersed with excerpts from Qur'an, the film presented Islam as an inherently violent and illiberal religion, [one that is] inimical to Western ways of life" (Zoonen et al., 2011, p.613-614).

The outburst to the movie ranged from "diplomatic questions to violent street protest" (Zoonen, Vis, et al., 2010, p.250). These protests were "covered by the international news media" (Ibid.) and "the release [and repercussions] of *Fitna* became an issue that exceeded the boundaries of the Dutch nation state" (Ibid.). A large number of "reports, analyses and comments focused on the problems that Wilders had in getting his video distributed as well as whether public broadcasters in the Netherlands had the right to show the film" (Ibid.). However, it was at this point that the role and significance of the internet was made clear by the fact that Wilders did not need any broadcaster for his movie since video streaming websites catering to user generated content were already available to him.

After enjoying quite some success in the 2006 Dutch elections, the movie *Fitna* projected Wilders in the limelight once again. Owing to the movie *Fitna*, and also because of Wilders' strong remarks in the media, he later faced criminal charges for, amongst other things, inciting hatred towards Islam. However, the court acquitted Wilders of all charges. Later, in the elections of 2010 he garnered even more public support and PVV became the third largest party in the parliament, becoming a part of the ruling coalition led by Rutte. However, over the issue of budget negotiations to cut down Netherlands' fiscal deficit, Wilders withdrew his support for VVD and the Dutch government fell on April 23, 2012 (The Economist, 2012a). As of today, Wilders is gearing up for the upcoming Dutch parliamentary elections on September 12, 2012.

Wilders to Netherlands: Abandon the Euro and exit the EU

Casting a glance at PVV's recent election campaign, one can clearly see that Wilders has revamped his political critique in light of the upcoming general Dutch elections of 2012. He has "moved on from anti-Muslim to [an] anti-European rhetoric" (The Economist, 2012b). Wilders not only wants "a Dutch exit from the Euro" (Ibid.) but also demands "a referendum on EU membership" (Ibid.). His rise in the current Dutch opinion polls is evidence that Wilders has once again captured the imagination of the Dutch electorate with his populistic vernacular. Only time will tell if Wilders will be politically successful third time in a row. However, with the recent resignations submitted by two prominent PVV members, things look more complex for Wilders (Cluskey, 2012). Nonetheless, the change in Wilders' political stance – from anti-Islamic to anti-European – leads to an interesting observation.

On a closer analysis, it becomes clear that there exists a strong similarity between the political discourse of Wilders with that of Fortuyn's, Hirsi Ali's, and Verdonk's critiques. Wilders believes that the practices and ideology of Islam is threatening the ideals of western liberal democracy (Fortuyn). He strongly criticizes Islamic practices that foster the ill-treatment of women and he even once called for a regulatory fine on the *burqa* (Hirsi Ali). Moreover, he is completely wary of the incompetent and ignorant Dutch political elite and wants to return the country to its citizens (Verdonk). Such a similarity is by no

means a simple coincidence. Wilders often refers to each of these politicians and even celebrates their efforts (Kessel, 2010; Vossen, 2010b). With the contemporary change in his political critique, it has become clear that Wilders has also learned from the mistakes of each of them. One of the biggest problems with populistic anti-Islamic rhetoric is the constant repetition of examples and criticisms that slowly makes the people grow tired and weary (Akkerman, 2003; Betz, 1994, 2002; Canovan, 1999). Fortuyn and Verdonk were often targeted for their lack of policy insights with regard to everything but Islam and integration (Vossen, 2010b; van Holsteyn & Irwin, 2003). Wilders clearly has more to say on the issue of economic and political reforms and this is evident in the latest election campaign. By celebrating the notion of Dutch tolerance and accepting the presence of 'good' Muslims in the Netherlands and worldwide, Wilders has also tried to steer away from Hirsi Ali's pitfall of condemning everything Islamic. Although it is debatable whether he has been successful in veering away from these mistakes, it is evident that he constantly tries to. The September 2012 elections will not only decide the future of Dutch politics but also show whether Wilders' has learned from the mistakes and pitfalls of his predecessors.

With this I conclude this section on Wilders' critique of Islam. The next five sections will now deal with the analysis of the Dutch case study through the theoretical heuristics of ressentiment. The next sections dealing with the five discourses – actions, means, social hierarchy, social outreach, and social institutions – will highlight the particular features within Dutch society that relate to the analysis of ressentiment.

Of actions: why are you anti-Islam and what are you doing about it?

This section deals with the discourse of actions with regard to the Dutch critique on Islam. The focus here is threefold: an analysis of the motives and reasons for the hostility, the nature of reactions of certain Dutch individuals and social groups towards Islam, and the subsequent implications of their chosen actions. In addition to the empirics laid down in the previous chapter, each of these categories also presents additional empirical vantage points to impart a nuanced understanding of the social shaping of the discourse of actions in relation to the critique on Islam. With regard to the first category, I focus on the Dutch immigration policy document of 1990, the widespread rise of the anti-Islamic sentiment post 9-11, the politics of Fortuyn and Hirsi Ali, and the acquittal of Wilders in the criminal trial. As a subtext to these particular focal points I examine the second category and explicate the nature of the tolerant Dutch discourse with regard to the 'inflicted damage' done by Islam. Finally, with regard to the third category I shall conclude this section by focusing on the prolonged inability of the anti-Islamic individuals and social groups in the Netherlands to affect an affirmative change with regard to their perceived repressive situation. The next subsections explore the aforementioned characteristics, starting with the first signs of the immigration debate in the Netherlands – the immigration policy report of 1990.

WRR's Immigrant Policy document of 1990: 'demographics and socioeconomics'

> "The men came first, as migrant workers in the late nineteen-sixties, to do jobs that the Dutch no longer wished to do: hard and dirty jobs in industry, or cleaning buildings and streets. Women followed about a decade later, often as brides, usually illiterate, dispatched straight from their villages to strange men in an even stranger land." (Buruma, 2005)

In the above quote, Buruma explains the first comings of the immigrants into Dutch society in the sixties. While the men came to do the 'dirty' jobs for the Dutch, the women simply followed suit. In the post-war period, one of the main political assertions was that Netherlands should not be an immigration country (Ministerie, 1970, as cited in Callejo, Mascareñas, Penninx, & Scholten, 2007). The immigrants coming into the country from Indonesia, Morocco, Turkey, and Southern Europe "were seen as repatriates, temporary migrants or guest workers" (p.4) rather than as a permanent feature. Thus, "until the mid-1970s, migration was only minimally regulated" (Ibid.) and it was only in the early eighties that "the presence of long-term factual immigrants had been recognized" (Ibid.). It then went on to become a national issue, leading up to the establishment of restrictive immigration policies in the eighties. Although the issue of immigration took centre stage during this time, it was still far off from the political limelight.

Until the nineties, "there was agreement among the elites of main [Dutch] political parties not to raise immigrant issues, but instead to resolve them through technocratic compromise" (p.3). During this time, the immigration policies "were formulated and implemented in a rather de-politicised context" (Ibid.) in line with the polder model of governance. Let me further highlight this fact by explaining a concrete example. In 1990, the *Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid* (Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy, WRR)[41] issued the authoritative report, titled *Immigrant Policy*, that clearly highlighted the social and economic problems posed and faced by the Dutch immigrants (WRR, 1990). The report problematizes the 60 percent growth in the number of immigrants in light of the dramatic rise of unemployment amongst these minorities – "reaching as much as 40 percent or more of the working population" (p.8). In this report WRR claimed that in the Netherlands, immigration "will be a lasting feature, even given the current restrictive entry policy" (p.10) and thus "it [was] imperative to ensure that the consequences of immigration take a positive route" (Ibid.).

The interesting thing to note in this report is the nature of WRR's articulation of the problems and possible solutions of immigration. The problems and solutions are presented in an economic and cultural tone, rather than a political one.[42] Phrases such as 'inter-ethnic contacts', 'opportunities to stand on their own feet', 'vulnerable position of immigrants', and 'unequal education opportunities' mark the crux of the report (WRR, 1990). With regard to possible solutions, the report emphasizes the role and significance of the welfare-state model. It recommends that "investment [should be made], especially in education, training and employment" (p.10), "government should respect cultural, ideological and denominational diversity" (p.13), and "opportunity for the mutual adjustment of values and norms [should be provided]" (p.51). The report clearly uses demographic statistics to make way for immigration policies within the Dutch welfare state. Although a detailed analysis of all the reports issued by WRR and the Dutch ministries falls beyond the purview of this thesis, I would like to emphasize the point that it was not just this one report that leaned towards the welfare state ideology. Majority of the further reports produced by the Dutch government and ministries in relation to immigration, development,

[41] The Scientific Council for Government Policy is an independent think-tank that works under the Ministry of General Affairs in the Netherlands. It supplies the government with information (both scientific and social) that can aid policy and decision making. Its job is to not only provide possible solutions for existing problems but also identify new potential problems within Netherlands.

[42] Further qualifying the usage, I would like to explain what I mean by the term 'political'. In this context, with the absence of a political tone, I refer to the non-articulation of the problems in terms of an immigrant's incompatibility with the values of the nation-state (*political sovereignty and cultural integration argument*) or in terms of the threat posed by the non-indigenous groups with regard to societal peace and harmony (*social hindrance and damage to state argument*). The focus was instead on the sheer economics of immigration and the way they could be culturally and socially integrated within Dutch society.

social welfare, human rights, and the EU also employ a welfare state model of governance to cater to socioeconomic and cultural problems (see MoEAAI[43], 2011; MoECS, 2011; MoFA[44], 2011, 2012; MoHWS[45], 2009, 2011; WRR, 2001a, 2001b, 2006, 2007).

This analysis highlights not only the depoliticized nature of the WRR report of 1990 but also the sustained focus in the Dutch government and ministry reports on the need to solve the problems via welfare state governance. To say that the 1990 report was the first to cater to the immigration problem would be wrong; however, the reason that I chose this example is because it was the first report to clearly highlight the permanent nature of immigration, and outlined the immigration policy within Netherlands based on the demographics of immigrants and the logistics of the welfare state. Moreover, the stress on the need to stick to the welfare state model further reinforced the ideology that immigration is here to stay *('we cannot do anything about it even with our restrictive policies')* and thus we must make attempts to utilize its potential and help the immigrants to stand up on their feet *('immigrants represent potential human resources')*. This ideology has since then been an important factor in the social shaping of the Dutch immigration policies (Callejo et al., 2007; Vliegenthart & Roggeband, 2007; WRR, 2001a, 2006).

There are two analytical conclusions to draw from this subsection. First, the initial WRR report that clearly outlined an immigration policy expounded on the demographics of immigration in a de-politicized way as early as 1990. There were a large number of immigrants and an equally large percentage of unemployment amongst them that generated problems of social welfare and economic growth. This demographic focus on immigration statistics has now become a sustained feature within the public debate on immigration within Netherlands (see Callejo et al., 2007; Doomernik, 2005; Kessel, 2010; Vellenga, 2008). Second, the Dutch policy and the polder governance model are intertwined with the welfare state ideology. Relevant stakeholders are identified and the government takes the responsibility to ensure the sustainable development of various sections of the society. Instead of simply labeling problems as external symptoms, the Dutch policies treat the problems as an integral part of the Dutch socioeconomic and cultural landscape (see Callejo et al., 2007; Dekker & Ester, 1996; Essed & Trienekens, 2008; Heijer, 2007; Semetko, 1998).

With regard to the heuristics of ressentiment, this clearly shows that the immigration issue has been a Dutch problem since as early as the eighties. Moreover, instead of treating the immigration issue as an external symptom, the Dutch casted it as an internal problem. This led the Dutch government to not simply take an immediate reaction and oust the immigrants form the country, but instead to defer the action towards the welfare state. This, within Scheler's sociology of ressentiment, can be understood as the blockage of the reactive impulse to banish all immigrants and this blockage is still evident within Dutch politics – with politicians and the ministries agreeing to the fact that immigrants are necessary for the economy to grow and flourish (see MoEAAI, 2011; MoECS, 2006; Vellenga, 2008; Vossen, 2010a, 2010b; WRR, 1990, 2001a). However, the Dutch public debate on immigration would not simply stick to the demographic and socioeconomic standpoint, and instead move between different discourses – the discourse of demographics being just one of them. Let us now move further in time to analyze the nature of the public debate post 9-11.

[43] MoEAAI stands for Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation.
[44] MoFA stands for Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
[45] MoHWS stands for Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

Dutch politics post 9-11: 'terror and threat'

With the impact and exposure of 9-11, "the long and checkered relationship between Islam and the West entered a new phase" [46] (Kalin, 2004, p.143). Worldwide these attacks were seen to mark the "coming of Islam as a menacing power with a clear intent to destroy Western civilization" (Ibid.). From newspapers to internet, Islam was labeled as "a violent, militant, and oppressive religious ideology" (Ibid.) and since then "the perception of Islam as an internal as well as an external threat has been at the forefront of both European and American political discourse" (Cesari, 2005, p.40). Two important attitudes towards Islam have come about as a direct repercussion of the attacks in New York and Washington. First, the perception of "Islam as the religion of the sword, Prophet as a violent person, [and] Muslim societies as monolithic, violent and power-driven collectivities" (Kalin, 2004, p.166) has been significantly reinforced within the public imagination. Second, the public imagination started to conceive of "Islam as a code of belief and action that is obstinately irrational, anti-modern, aberrant, rigid, religious, and traditional" (Ibid.). Amidst such an environment, the Netherlands was not immune to this anti-Islam rhetoric.

Out of all the Dutch elite values, perhaps the most interesting one is the "Dutch fascination with and loyalty to America, perhaps the strongest in all of Western Europe" (Valenta, 2006). Therefore, the aftermath of 9-11 in the Netherlands was marked not only by an outcry of grief and sorrow but also by the sheer shock over "the fact that a sizeable number of Dutch Muslims said they 'understood' the reasons for the attack, some, young boys, to the point of dancing in the street afterwards" [47] (Ibid.). This was perhaps the first tangible signal for the Dutch to understand that not only was there a difference between Muslim and Dutch sensibilities but also that "the nation was not immune to the import of global conflicts" (Ibid.). This fact would be reinforced later through the assassination of Pim Fortuyn in 2002 and Theo van Gogh in 2004. The assassinations would mark the "failure of Dutch tolerance and of Dutch multiculturalism in the face of Islamicist violence" (Ibid.) and fuel the fears that "Islam in the Netherlands is a source of extremist violence" (Vellenga, 2008, p.32). With regard to news media, a study shows that after the assassination of van Gogh, the Dutch "journalists tended to make more negative pronouncements about Muslims and more positive statements about non-Muslims" (Brinks, 2005, p.147). Whereas before the assassination the Dutch press had a general focus on Islam, "after the murder the key issue became the relation of Islam with other (non-Muslim) groups in the Dutch society" (p.147-148). Moreover, post 9-11 Netherlands "experienced an increase in attacks on Muslims, and attitudes between Muslims and non-Muslims […appear] to have been polarized" (Kelley & Morgenstern, 2006). Clearly, the issue had moved on from demographics to the difference between the sensibilities of the two cultures.

Within Netherlands it can be observed that "external events have a considerable impact on how issues are framed in both media and parliament" (Vliegenthart & Roggeband, 2007, p.314). Owing to the Dutch merchant tradition, there has always been a sense of "seriousness to the contemporary [Dutch] daily press and an emphasis on international affairs" (Semetko, 1998, p.144) and thus it was no surprise that the September 11 attacks featured prominently within the Dutch media and parliament. The attacks had a strong impact on media, "causing a 115 percent increase in issue attention, which […declined] only slowly with time" (Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007, p.307). One particular research showed that within Dutch news media, "Muslims were strongly associated with terrorism after 9/11, and although

[46] For a historical and conceptual analysis of the dispute between the Western ideology and Islam refer to Kalin (2004).
[47] For an overview of the Dutch Muslim discourse with regard to 9-11 and other social issues refer to Brouwer (2004) and Varisco (2010).

this level dropped, it stayed significantly higher than before 9/11" (Ruigrok & van Atteveldt, 2007, p.84). Roggeband & Vliegenthart (2007), while analyzing the focus points within the Dutch debate on immigration between 1995 and 2004, show that "after the events of 9/11[…], there […was] an increase of the Islam-as-threat frame in both the media and parliament, although this change […was] considerably larger in the media" (p.540). Within nine months, the media had a field day with Fortuyn's assassination in 2002 and as a consequence "simmering and overt popular resentment of the old political-administrative culture was encouraged or reinforced" (Margary, 2007, p.110). Later, the death of van Gogh in 2004 also resulted in "a sharp peak in Dutch coverage [related to immigration, integration, and Islam]"(Ruigrok & van Atteveldt, 2007, p.78). All of these had a significant impact on the Dutch public opinion on Islam and subsequently on the public debate on immigration.

At this time, a large number of scholars stressed that the Dutch debate on immigration (and on Islam in general) was "to a large extent inspired by fear" (Veer, 2002; Mak, 2005, as cited in Vellenga, 2008, p.28). Owing to Fortuyn's and van Gogh's death, and September 11 attacks, these notions of "insecurity and fear […] radically changed the perspective on multiculturalism in the Netherlands and […] transformed the debate into a debate on 'radical' Islam and the 'war on terror'" (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005, p.336). The political camps were polarized into "naïve leftists supporting multiculturalism versus the ones who […saw] the real threat from Islam" (Ibid.). All of these events not only led to a reshaping of the public debate on immigration in terms of the perceived terror threat from Islam, but also lead to a major shift in the debate.

The debate was now framed with regard to Islam as a cultural problem as opposed to the earlier belief that immigration was largely an economic issue. A definite injury was felt not so much in terms of the sheer demographics and economic liability of immigrants but rather in terms of the threat posed by Islam and the difference in the sensibilities of the two cultures. Clearly, the Dutch now saw a bigger problem with immigrants in addition to the economic and social liability that came along with them. With regard to the heuristics of ressentiment, it becomes clear at this point that the particular subject or abstraction (Islam) was identified for the problems faced by certain Dutch individuals and groups. Islam was deemed as being responsible not only for the terror threat but also for the problems of immigration and integration in general. Such a perceived terror threat within the public opinion was picked up by various politicians such as Pim Fortuyn and Hirsi Ali.

Fortuyn and Hirsi Ali: 'emancipation'

Although the immigration and integration debate was present to some extent during the nineties, "it is said to have increased enormously with the emergence of populist politician Pim Fortuyn in the 2002 election campaign" (Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007, p.299). Fortuyn was vehemently against certain Islamic values which he deemed incompatible with the Western liberal tradition. He labeled Islam as a backward religion owing to certain cultural and political practices associated with it. His political performance with regard to immigration policies and Islam "instantly produced a major media-hype around him" (Vellenga, 2008, p.33). Calling for the futility of Article One and denigrating the contemporary *linkse kerk* Dutch discourse, Fortuyn not only criticized the Dutch elite but also explicitly attacked Islam. He "saw Islam as a threat to gay rights and other cherished fruits of the social revolution in the 1960s" (Buruma, 2010) and one of his famous complaints was: "I don't see why we should fight for gay rights and females emancipation all over again" (Ibid.).

Such a politics of sexual freedom "played a central role in entangling antipathy towards Islam" (Mepschen, Duyvendak, & Tonkens, 2010, p.968) in the 2002 elections. Fortuyn, along with 9-11, had a major influence on the public perception of politics and "the Dutch Parliamentary Election Study 2002 […showed that] problems related to asylum seekers, immigration and integration were seen as major national problems by the Dutch electorate: 40 percent of all respondents mentioned this problem in response to an open-ended question" (van Holsteyn & Irwin, 2003, p.45). Following Fortuyn's death, although LPF was successful in the 2002 elections, the success was short lived and LPF soon vanished without making any impact on the immigration policies.

Similar to Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali also saw an ideological disjuncture between Islam and the West. Although she later generalized her critique, initially Hirsi Ali had primarily focused on the subordinate position of women within Islam. Not only did she publicize the inhumane practice of female circumcision but also targeted the Qur'an for facilitating the subjugation of Islamic women. However, amidst such a strong critique, and before she became a politician, there were rumors that Hirsi Ali became a victim to a large number of death threats.[48] This particular news created a complete media-hype around Hirsi Ali and "public solidarity emerged throughout the country by means of postcard action, support advertisement in quality papers, and the *Support Ayaan Hirsi Ali* website" (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005, p.326). Moreover, at the same time a group comprising of "well-known liberal writers, academics, journalists, and politicians" (p.327) was formed that wanted to defend her. They even referred to Hirsi Ali as the "new Dutch Salman Rushdie" (Ibid.). When Hirsi Ali joined politics, she was given the portfolio for emancipation issues and she became a vehement supporter of woman rights.

Later, the film *Submission* made by Hirsi Ali and Theo van Gogh "led to an enormous media war and explosion of public debate in and beyond the Netherlands" (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005, p.325). The film not only portrayed the subordinate and oppressive position of women within Islam but also "implied that [… this] violence is legitimated by particular Koranic verses" (p.327). The film, made primarily for a Western (Dutch) audience unable to read Arabic calligraphy, opened the Pandora's Box by "[encouraging] the Orientalist gaze and […affirming] the Western/Dutch fear which these stereotypical images of the Muslim 'other' evoke" (p.328). The film was aired publicly at numerous places in the world, including Netherlands, and became a viral video on the internet especially after the death of van Gogh in 2004 (Jusová, 2008).

Up until this point in Dutch politics, Fortuyn had already targeted the oppressive position of women within Islam. Although this was not the main point of his critique, he indeed articulated this as one of the major bone of contention within his perception of incompatibility of Islam with the Dutch way of life (Akkerman, 2005; Vossen, 2010b). However, it was Hirsi Ali who pinpointed this issue by recasting it through an emancipatory lens. The movie *Submission* not only reaffirmed Fortuyn's critique but also gave it the particular angle of 'we-need-to-help-these-women'. Clearly, emancipation was the forte of Hirsi Ali and the movie helped her immensely to redefine the discourse from '"white men saving brown women from brown men' (colonialism), […to] a 'brown' woman (Hirsi Ali) [...wanting] to save other 'brown women' from 'brown' men" (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005, p.333). Moreover, portraying herself as an authentic insider on Islam, Hirsi Ali was able to make "the politics of saving even more effective by dismissing denunciations of speaking from a white masculinist position" (Ibid.).

[48] Although there exists no factual data on the death threats, Hirsi Ali and her supporters have always argued that the death threats were (and are) real (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005).

With regard to the heuristics of ressentiment, this subsection showcases two important points. First, while Fortuyn and LPF gave the anti-Islamic individuals and groups in the Netherlands some hope of affecting a practical change in their situation, Fortuyn's death and the demise of LPF only reinforced the inability of these groups to affect a change, making them feel more vulnerable and impotent. This was further reinforced later with the failure of Verdonk's party ToN as well. Second, by bringing the issue of emancipation within the debate, Hirsi Ali imparted some level of justification to the Dutch hostility towards Islam. Portraying herself as an authentic insider on Islam, Hirsi Ali reinforced the 'white man's burden' (Easterly, 2006) by highlighting the subordinate and repressive position of Islamic women in an even more negative light. The nature of the articulation of the Dutch hostility towards Islam changed from 'there is a perceived threat' to 'not only is there a perceived threat but also their ideologies and holy book are fallacious'. However, such an emancipatory theme within the public debate soon shifted with the assassination of van Gogh and the acquittal of Wilders in his criminal trial.

Van Gogh's assassination and Wilders' acquittal: 'the issue of free speech'

As I have already shown in the previous chapter, similar to Fortuyn's assassination in 2002, van Gogh's assassination in 2004 was also framed as an attack on the liberal democratic right to free speech. Prime Minister Balkenende and justice minister Donner both condemned the brutal killing of van Gogh as an assault on Dutch tolerance and freedom of speech. The news of the assassination, broadcasted over the country's national television network and watched by more than a million viewers (Pritchard & Clement, 2004), was treated neither as an act of terrorism nor as a senseless act of violence. It was an open attack on one of the most upheld western democratic principle: the freedom of expression. This perceived damage to liberal democratic tradition "in connection with the publication of the cartoons about Muhammad in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands Posten* [made Hirsi Ali declare] that she wanted to defend the right to freedom of speech as the right to offend hard-lined Muslims" (Hirsi Ali, 2005, as cited in Vellenga, 2008, p.27).

This notion of free speech was highlighted again with regard to *Fitna* and Wilders' criminal trial. For Wilders, the freedom of speech has been of paramount importance not only because of the explicit nature of his anti-Islamic critique but also owing to the nature of media discussions after the assassinations of Fortuyn and van Gogh. With regard to the Dutch mainstream media, within "the coverage of *Fitna* and [the] ensuing events, discussions often revolved around issues of free speech" (Zoonen et al., 2011, p.16). One of the prime reasons for this was the nature of quotes used in the movie *Fitna*, for example:

> "Islam wants to rule, submit and seeks to destroy our Western civilisation. In 1945, Nazism was defeated in Europe. In 1989, communism was defeated in Europe. Now the Islamic ideology has to be defeated. Stop Islamisation. Defend our freedom" (Wilders, 2008b).

Thus, within the context of *Fitna*, the societal focus was "much more on the issue of freedom of speech than on the film's portrayal of Islam" (Zoonen, Vis, et al., 2010, p.250). It must be noted at this point that such a framing of *Fitna* in light of free speech is in line with Wilders' presentation of himself "as [a] relentless freedom fighter whose ideas and life are under continuous siege of Islamic terrorists" (Ibid.). This in turn helped him to not only get the support of people with strong anti-Islamic views but also "of many people who […did] not have a strong anti-Islam sentiment, but who […felt] that everybody should be able to speak their mind" (Ibid.). However, owing to *Fitna* and his polemical remarks in the

media towards Muslims in particular and Islam in general, Wilders was criminally charged on the counts of hate speech and acts of defamation towards religious groups in October, 2010.

The charges were filed not only by certain private individuals but also by organization such as the Dutch Muslim Broadcasting Association and the Dutch anti-racism organization *Nederland Bekent Klaeur* (The Netherlands Shows Its Colors) (Forum, 2011). The charges ranged from insulting ethic and religious groups and inciting hatred to fostering discrimination amongst social groups in the society.[49] However, on June 23, 2011, Wilders was acquitted of all charges by the Dutch court. In the final verdict, the court ruled that "Wilders' statement that the Dutch people should protect themselves against Muslims went right to the borders of the acceptable [exercise of the freedom of expression]" (Kahn, 2011a, p.15). Post-acquittal, Wilders has not only reinforced the futility of Article One of the Dutch constitution but also called forth for the scrapping of the Dutch hate speech laws.[50] Proclaiming the day of his acquittal as "a beautiful day for freedom of speech" (Wilders, 2011b), Wilders claimed that "citizens should never allow themselves to be silenced" (Ibid.).

What evidently becomes clear from the societal dynamics with regard to van Gogh's assassination, the movie *Fitna*, and the acquittal of Wilders is the changing nature of the Dutch debate on immigration. The focus was clearly on the liberal democratic value of free speech in all of these instances. Free speech was played off against the ideology of Islam. It was perceived that Islam was an oppressive and authoritative religion, which cannot accommodate for a liberal democratic ideal such as the freedom of expression. Moreover, such a framing was facilitated by Wilders, who had been voicing a similar critique of Islam for a long time. Such a recasting of the public debate on immigration within the context of free speech further aided the political rise of PVV in the 2010 elections by garnering the support of not only the anti-Islamic individuals but also those people who had a high regard for the ability of an individual to speak out freely within a democracy. However, even within these political and societal dynamics of democratic ideals and the portrayal of Islam as an anti-democratic and oppressive religion, the anti-Islamic individuals and social groups in the Netherlands including Wilders have been unable to affect a significant practical change within their situation, leading to an increasing anxiousness within the Dutch societal environment.

Living with paralysis: the anxiousness of Dutch society

The public debate on immigration and integration can be placed within the larger Dutch narrative of reasserting "neo-liberal politics and strong 'moral' positions" (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005, p.334). The Dutch political commentator Bas Heijne coined the term *engagementskitsch* (commitment kitsch) to "refer to the sudden inflation of angry neo-liberals writing wake-up calls, in the form of furious 'open letters' published in national newspapers, to warn of the 'dangers of Islam'" (Heijne, 2004, as cited in de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005, p.334). This commitment kitsch redefined political correctness and made it "possible for 'ordinary' citizens to express what they 'really feel'" (Ibid.). The nature of the narrative changed from 'the politicians dare to say what we think' to 'this is what I think'. The opening lines of an article by the famous Dutch political-scientist Paul Scheffer in one of the major national newspaper

[49] A detailed analysis of the criminal trial is beyond the scope of this chapter. For a detailed overview of the criminal trial and the court proceedings refer to Forum (2011).
[50] Similar to most of the European countries, Netherlands has also enforced a ban on hate speech and group defamation (refer to Dutch Penal Code Sections 137 and 138). For an overview of European hate speech laws refer to Kahn (2011b).

embody this narrative completely: "We should not hand over our country" (Scheffer, 2004, as cited in de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005, p.334).

However, even within such a liberal environment, these anti-Islamic individuals and social groups have not been able to affect a significant practical change within Dutch policies. Dependent largely on politicians and political parties, the anti-Islamic Dutch citizens and groups have faced constant failures to affect a practical change within their perceived repressive situation against Islam. The policy document of 1990 and later the Dutch ministries framed the immigration problem as one of demographics, and socioeconomics, and looked towards the welfare state for possible solutions. 9-11 colored the Dutch public debate with the 'war on terror' and made the people aware of the difference in the sensibilities of the two cultures. Fortuyn and LPF's success story was short lived. Hirsi Ali brought emancipatory issues to the forefront; however, she too was unable to affect a change in the Dutch immigration policies. Although Wilders has been successful in two elections and has enjoyed the support of a large part of the electorate, as of today even he has been unable to completely oust Islam from Dutch society. As a result, the anti-Islamic Dutch citizens and groups now live on within a perceived anxious yet hostile sociocultural environment.

With this I conclude this section on the discourse of actions. Five analytical conclusions can be inferred from the analysis in this section pertaining to Scheler's sociology of ressentiment with regard to anti-Islamic individuals and groups. First, in the Netherlands there has been a clear identification of the subject (Islam) that is deemed responsible for the felt injury caused by immigration *('it is only because of it that we are in this situation')*. Islam is seen as a threat not only to the Dutch way of life but also to democracy at large. Second, over and over the Dutch politicians have had to check the immediate reactive populistic impulse to banish all Muslim immigrants from the country *('the reactive impulse would be counter-intuitive and otherwise what would be the difference between us (tolerant) and them (oppressive)')*. The reasons for this have ranged from the Dutch ideals of tolerance and multiculturalism to the economic viability of skilled immigrants. Third, time and again the anti-Islamic individuals and groups in the Netherlands have witnessed the inability to affect a significant practical change in their perceived repressive situation with regard to the threat posed by Islam, making them feel vulnerable and impotent *('long term unfulfilled thirst for revenge is the most important source of ressentiment')*. Starting from Fortuyn and LPF and up until the current time, the influx of Muslim immigrants in the country has not stopped, the Qur'an has not been censored, and the perceived threat posed by Islam still exists. Fourth, the prolonged hostility of Dutch people towards Islam incorporates a strong sense of justice *('they have it coming because they deprive us of our rightful possessions')*. This justice operates not only at the level of emancipation but also at the level of integration. The Dutch feel that the presence of Islam within their society is an aberrant symptom that challenges and threatens the Dutch liberal way of life – something that is seen as a rightful and hard-earned possession. Clearly the heuristics within the discourse of actions are conducive to the origins and facilitation of ressentiment. Let us now move on to the discourse of means to analyze whether the factors there are conducive to ressentiment as well.

Of means: how do you know that you hatred is justified?

The focus in this section is twofold: a) on the processes through which the Dutch people discern and (re)affirm their convictions and beliefs, and b) on the value delusion that exists within Dutch society with regard to western liberal values. With regard to (a), the first and second subsections deal with the increased consumption of information regarding Islam and Islamic practices, and portrays the ways in

which the Dutch people may formulate their political opinions. With regard to (b), the third subsection deals with the perceived incompatibility in Dutch society between the ideology of Islam and that of the West.

Consuming Islam: news media and internet

News media plays a significant role in the shaping of an individual's political and social opinions, and media factors are vital in the emergence and development of populistic parties [51] (Stewart, Mazzoleni, & Horsfield, 2003). During the seventies and eighties, "the subject of immigration and integration was not one of the principal topics dealt with in the [Dutch] media" (Prins, 2004, as cited in Vellenga, 2008, p.25). The trigger was the year 1990 when "the Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini proclaimed a religious edict (*fatwa*) of death declaring the writer Salman Rushdie guilty of blasphemy in his book *Satanic Verses*" (p.25). The Dutch were shocked when "a large group of Muslims demonstrated in The Hague to support the *fatwa*" (Ibid.) and this not only "aroused a storm of indignation in the Dutch press" (Ibid.) but also led several public figures to plead "in favor of the abolition of the government's multicultural policy" (Vellenga, 2008, p.25). The Rushdie affair aroused strong feeling within Netherlands and portrayed the ideological clash between Muslims and the Dutch. Such a clash "for the first time drew attention to the significance of the religious dimension of integration [within Netherlands]" (p.29). A research done on the period from 1990-95 has shown that the Dutch news media usually discussed ethnic minorities in the light of criminalization and problematization (Wester, Scheepers, & Lubbers, 1998). These were the years before Fortuyn, 9-11, Hirsi Ali, and Wilders – and the portrayal of Dutch ethnic minorities (Muslims) in a negative light has only increased over time (see Kessel, 2010; Vasterman, 2005; Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007b; Vreese, 2007).

Ideological clashes were also visible in 2001 when Muslim boys danced on the streets of Netherlands rejoicing the falling of the twin towers or when many Muslim youngsters supported the claim of the Moroccan imam – El Moumni – that homosexuality is a dangerous disease (see Vellenga, 2008). Moreover, the Madrid subway bombings on March 11, 2003, and the London subway bombings on July 7, 2005, were also prominently highlighted within the Dutch news media (Ruigrok & van Atteveldt, 2007) and on the internet (Chadwick & Howard, 2009). In the meantime the Dutch public was a spectator and all of these events sensitized the people to the ideological clash between Islam and the western liberal way of life. These anti-integration sentiments were later influenced not only by politicians such as Fortuyn and Wilders but also by the plethora of anti-Islamic content in the news media, television, and internet, and the "high attention given to international conflicts and terrorist attacks linked to Islamic fundamentalism partially led to a new threat perception" (Ettinger & Udris, 2009, p.69).

Netherlands is a highly developed country in terms of information infrastructures. More than 90 percent of people have televisions and the sales of personal computers and information devices exceeds even that of television sets (Semetko, 1998). According to the recent statistics released by the Internet World Stats (IWS) organization, approximately 90 percent of the Dutch population has an online presence (IWS, 2012). In such an information society, it can be safely assumed that people have

[51] It is extremely difficult to gauge the *qualitative* effect of news media on the political and social opinion-making within a society. Thus, with regard to the role and significance of media factors I only refer to the 'visibility' and 'prominence' of issues in the media (see Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007).

enormous exposure to information in terms of accessibility. Moreover, almost all major Dutch newspapers are also available online (Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007a).

News media have a considerable impact on electoral politics because an issue's "impact on vote intention largely depends on the intensity of discussion of the event in the media" (p.414). Moreover, since Dutch media tends "to follow politics, […this results] in increased attention […towards] immigration and integration [issues]" (Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007a, p.301). A research has also shown that "opinion-making in the [Dutch] media is to a large extent influenced by the earlier presented opinions of politicians" (Vliegenthart & Roggeband, 2007, p.298). Within such a context, the nature of the news media with regard to multiculturalism, ethnic minorities, immigration and Islam becomes an important factor in the public debate on immigration, especially because of the popularity of politicians such as Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali, and Wilders. Although a detailed analysis of the content of Dutch news media is beyond the scope of this section, various researches have shown that a large part of the Dutch news media characterizes immigrants, especially of Moroccan and Turkish descents, in a negative light [52] (see Ruigrok & van Atteveldt, 2007; Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007b; Vreese & Elenbas, 2011; Wal, d' Haenens, & Koeman, 2005; Wester et al., 1998).

Additionally, the internet also features various "prominent anti-Muslim propaganda sites put out by Christian organizations, one of the most visible being AnsweringIslam.org, which is available in the major languages spoken by Muslims [including Dutch]" (Varisco, 2010, p.164). Even Hirsi Ali "maintains an official blog in Dutch and multiple languages, as well as a MySpace page available to public" [53] (Ibid.). Apart from these, there is also the blatantly political website called 'Jihad Watch'[54] run by Robert Spencer, an American author known for his commentary on Islam. All of these sites[55] are "primarily for consumption by non-Muslims and spread Islamophobic commentary to an often gullible audience" [56] (Ibid.). Although it is quite difficult to analyze the role and significance of these websites for the Dutch public debate on immigration, I mention them to highlight the nature of information that the online Dutch community is exposed to.

Furthermore, with the advent of television and video streaming sites on the internet, the impact of an issue has increasingly moved beyond the text into the visual sphere. For example, the movie *Fitna* was ramified into the online realm and "ordinary citizens […] engaged in the pro and contra *Fitna* arguments using the many opportunities of the Internet to communicate their views to dispersed audiences" (Zoonen et al., 2010, p.250). Apart from the content on the usual array of internet tools – blogs, bulletin boards, forums, and social media – "thousands of home-made videos were uploaded either in protest or support of Wilders and *Fitna*, suggesting that video upload channels [for example YouTube] have become important arenas for political activity and communication" (Ibid.). On YouTube, roughly "1413 unique uploads" (p.253) were done with regard to *Fitna* – the average length of the videos being "5 min" (p.254) and the view counts ranged from "40 […to] a maximum of about 3.6

[52] The Dutch reader may refer to Kleinnijenhuis (2003), Kleinnijenhuis, Oegema, de Ridder, & Bos (1995), and Kleinnijenhuis, Oegema, de Ridder, van Hoof, & Vliegenthart (2003) for an authoritative analysis of the politics of Dutch news media, especially with regard to the public debate on immigration.
[53] Blog link: http://ayaanhirsiali.weblog.nl/, MySpace link: http://www.myspace.com/ayaanhirsiali. MySpace is a social networking website.
[54] Link: http://www.jihadwatch.org/
[55] For an in-depth analysis of the rise of the Muslim discourse on the Internet refer to Anderson (2003), Bunt (2000, 2003), and Wheeler (2006).
[56] Although it is not relevant to the focus of this research, there are also numerous websites that aim to answer back at Islamophobic websites and anti-Islamic content – a prime example being http://www.islamophobia-watch.com/

million for the most watched video" (Ibid.). In short, "over 10 million viewers watched one or more videos […], with almost 250,000 comments made altogether" (Ibid.). Clearly, YouTube was not a marginal player in the *Fitna* controversy and "offered a global platform with almost half of the videos uploaded from the Netherlands, the United States and the UK, and other half from countries across the globe" (Ibid.). In this way, YouTube and other video streaming sites provide a meaningful "platform for a virtual and dispersed community constructed and defined [, for example,] through the articulation and interpretation of *Fitna* and Geert Wilders" [57] (Zoonen et al., 2010, p.252). Although such a detailed analysis of the outreach of the movie *Submission* is not available, various researches have shown that the movie not only became a viral phenomenon on the internet but also played a significant role within the Dutch debate on immigration and Islam (see Ghorashi, 2003; Jusová, 2008; Snel & Stock, 2008; Traufetter, 2007; de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005). Figure 1 depicts scenes from the movie *Submission* and *Fitna*.

Figure 1: Scenes from van Gogh and Hirsi Ali's *Submission* (left) and Wilder's *Fitna* (right)[58]

I have highlighted the significance of internet and news media in shaping the public debate on immigration in the Netherlands to showcase a particular feature that relates to the analysis of ressentiment. The enormous amount of anti-Islamic information in the news media or on the internet not only indicates the particular nature of the worldwide discourse on Islam but also constantly influences and redefines the same discourse. Scheler had asserted that when opinions are not formulated through direct contact with reality, the thought process may itself become impregnated with features of ressentiment. As of today, it is quite rare for a reader to have actually witnessed a reported event and "most people hear or read about events in the media and do not experience them directly" (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007, p.414). Be it 9-11, Fortuyn's and van Gogh's assassination, or other political and social events related to Islam – people mostly experience them indirectly through news media, internet or conversations. It is reasonable to assume that the development of the Dutch public

[57] For a detailed understanding of the responses to *Fitna* and their correlation to the internet's ability to influence political landscapes, refer to Zoonen et al. (2011) in addition to Zoonen, Vis, et al. (2010).
[58] Source: Submission (http://lifeafterwcg2.files.wordpress.com/2007/11/normal_theo_van_gough_movie_shot_041102.jpg), and *Fitna* (http://b.vimeocdn.com/ts/106/710/106710425_640.jpg)

opinion towards Islam is generally characterized by a similar process especially within the contemporary sociotechnical landscape.

Although perhaps the best way to form an opinion towards a religion is to live with the people practicing it, "most people do not have direct contact with ethnic minorities and thus rely on hearsay and the media as main sources for their knowledge about ethnic minority groups and issues" (Wal, d' Haenens, & Koeman, 2005, p.937). Thus, with regard to the heuristics of ressentiment it can be inferred that within Dutch society the public opinion on the Islamic minority is conceived not so much through direct contact with Muslims and the religion of Islam, but generally through the information disseminated on news media and the internet – an indirect tinkering with reality that, as Scheler argued, fosters ressentiment. Moreover, in addition to the increased exposure to anti-Islamic information, another important factor within the Dutch public debate on immigration is the political dynamics within other European countries.

Love thy neighbor: the European outcry against integration, immigration, and elite politics

To say that the anti-immigration and anti-elitist environment in the Netherlands is a unique phenomenon would be wrong. In the last two decades, "Western-Europe has witnessed various manifestations of popular discontent with political parties and democratic institutions on one hand and with European integration and multicultural society on the other hand" (Vossen, 2010, p.1). The most visible of these manifestations has been the electoral success of "Front National in France, Forza Italia and Lega Nord in Italy, the Danish people's party and the Norwegian Progress Party in Scandinavia, the Swiss People's Party and the Vlaams Belang and Lijst Dedecker in Belgium" (Ibid.). More often than not, political commentators and social scientists draw comparisons between these parties and LPF or PVV (see Betz, 2002; Kessel, 2010; Taggart, 2000; The Economist, 2006, 2010, 2011; Vossen, 2010a, 2010b). The aim of this subsection is not to describe the political rhetoric of these parties but instead to highlight the fact that in addition to LPF and PVV there are also other successful parties in Europe with a similar hard-lined agenda on multiculturalism, immigration, and Islam.[59] Moreover, sociological research has indeed shown that the rise of these anti-immigration right-wing parties in Europe has a significant impact on the politics of other European countries, especially with regard to the public debates on immigration and integration (see Betz, 1994, 2002; Lynch & Beer, 1990; van Spanje, 2010; van der Brug & Fennema, 2007). Figure 2 depicts an infographic that provides further insight regarding the rise of right-wing parties similar to LPF and PVV in Europe.

The rise of these anti-immigration right-wing parties showcases two important points for the analysis of ressentiment. First, the success (and to some extent the manifesto) of these parties provides people with an additional resource through which they can discern their own beliefs and values. In addition to the exposure to anti-Islamic information in news media or on the internet – the political dynamics of European democracies provides an important vantage point within the public debate on immigration in the Netherlands. For the individuals who are *yet* to formulate a firm opinion towards multiculturalism or immigration, this resource provides another way to discern their convictions and values *('what do they think? What is happening there?')*. These beliefs and opinions may then be influenced by

[59] For an understanding of the right-wing anti-immigration political rhetoric in the rest of Europe refer to Benson (2002), Betz (2002), Blaagard (2010), Cherribi (2003), Fennema (1997), The Economist (2011), Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden (2009), and Vollaard, Otjes, & Pellikaan (2007).

the exposure to the politics within other European democracies instead of tinkering with reality in one's own country. This indirect way of forming an opinion is a typical characteristic of a man of ressentiment.

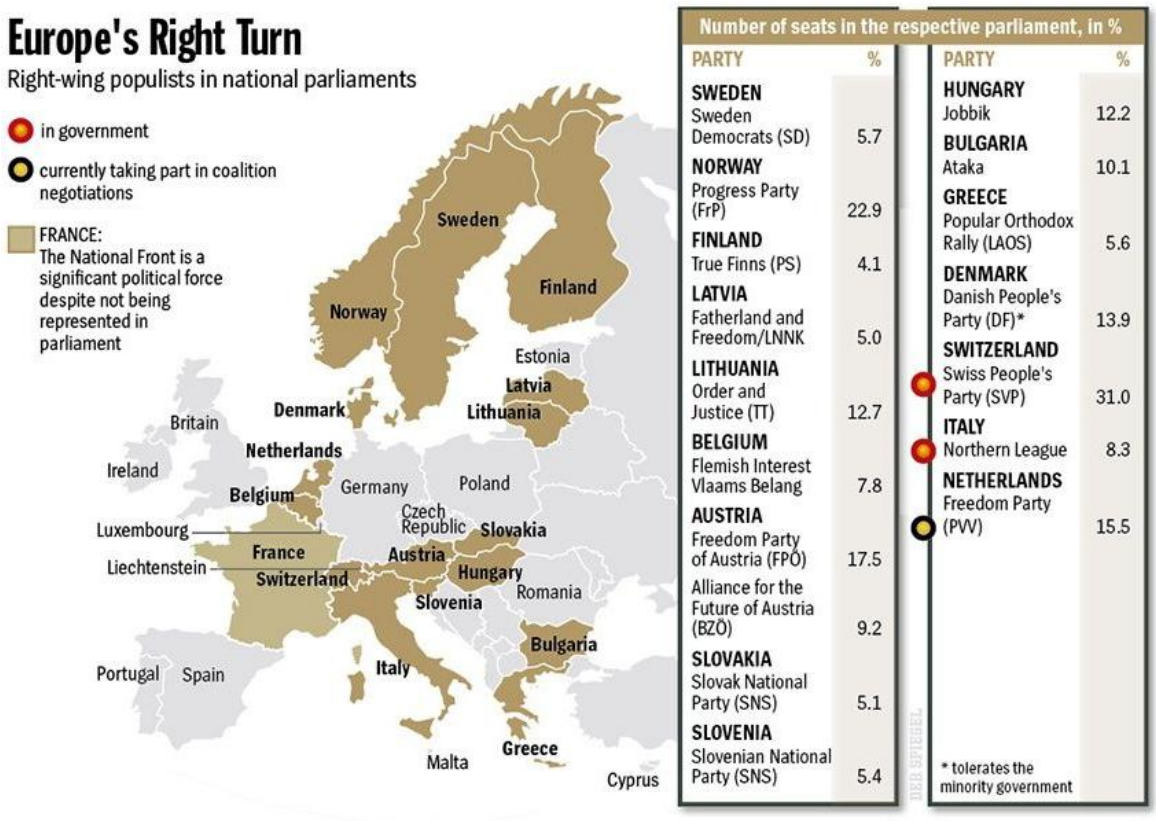

Figure 2: An infographic depicting the rise of right-wing parties in Europe as of 2011[60]

Second, with regard to the verification of one's convictions and values I had explained earlier that the men of ressentiment constantly seek to validate their own judgments through the opinion of other people. Thus, the exposure to the success of such parties can not only help an individual to formulate an opinion but also provide an individual with the means to validate and confirm his opinions *('see! Even he agrees with me')*. In this way the rise of these right-wing parties not only imparts an important resource for the Dutch public to formulate and affirm their political stance but also helps politicians such as Wilders to reinforce their populistic ideological beliefs by pointing to the politics in other countries *('look there! It is not just my opinion but one that is coming up everywhere')*. Furthermore, the development of anti-Islamic beliefs and values over time makes the Dutch perceive an inherent incompatibility between the tradition of Islam and Western liberal values.

The perceived incompatibility with Islam: the 'value debate'

> "[For the Dutch], there is a sharp contrast between Western culture and Islam: Western culture is enlightened, Islam is backward; Western culture advocates tolerance, Islam is intolerant; Western culture promotes freedom, Islam is oppressive; Western culture stands for equality, Islam propagates inequality; Western culture is democratic, Islam is essentially undemocratic; Western culture inclines towards secularism, Islam has a tendency to develop into fundamentalism." (Vellenga, 2008, p.30)

[60] Source: Spiegel Online (2011)

In the above quote, Vellenga clearly highlights the public perception of Islam within Netherlands. The Dutch public debate on immigration is colored with binary distinctions – Islam on one hand, western culture on the other. Binary distinctions not only polarize a debate but also force people to choose sides – a middle ground or consensus is hard to establish. Moreover, with regard to the nature of the risk posed by immigrants, it is not "primarily the focus on economic threat in immigration-related news [and internet content…], but presumably some perception of a cultural threat and accordingly a public problematization of immigration [and Islam]" (Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007b, p.413). In the past few years, "the focus of the [public] debate [on immigration] has moved from socio-economic integration to cultural integration" (Vellenga, 2008, p.29).

However, Netherlands, hailed as an exemplar of multiculturalism, still prides in the Dutch value of tolerance and integration. Nonetheless, the anti-Islamic individuals and groups, by changing the nature of the debate from societal and socioeconomic assimilation to cultural integration, create a binary distinction in which one is felt inherent inferior to other. Such polarization essentially turns the Dutch values of tolerance and multiculturalism upside-down by showcasing that integration in neither possible nor feasible. Tolerance and integration are thus showcased as being unfit parameters with regard to Muslim immigrants – for they are seen as *essentially* incompatible with the western liberal way of life. It is thus clear that there has been a devaluing of the glorified attributes of tolerance and multiculturalism in the wake of the threat posed by Islam, and this is evident in the fact that various politicians have even argued for the futility of Article One of the constitution. Populistic Dutch politicians, such as Wilders, "want to resist intolerant Muslims in the name of traditional Dutch liberty – while denouncing traditional Dutch tolerance [and multiculturalism] as elitist propaganda" (Buruma, 2010). In line with Betz's quote at the beginning of this chapter, we can clearly discern a value delusion on part of the anti-Islamic individuals and groups – the political elites are challenged and their values are undermined, serving as a basis for the legitimacy of the claims of these individuals.

With this I conclude the analysis of the discourse of means. The Dutch heuristics within this discourse are evidently in line with the heuristics of Scheler's sociology of ressentiment. There is clearly a strong tendency within Dutch society to discern and affirm their convictions primarily through the opinion of others (news media, internet, or European politics) instead of direct contact with concerned subjects (Muslims). What is more, the rise of right-wing parties in the rest of Europe can also serve as the basis for reinstating the hostility or as the basis for Dutch politicians such as Wilders to lend legitimacy to their political actions. Moreover, it is also evident that the emphasis on values within the Dutch public debate on immigration is characteristic of ressentiment value delusion, in which the aspired positive goals (tolerance and multiculturalism) are devalued by reinstating the pragmatics of anti-integration with regard to the perceived threat from Islam. This goes hand in hand with the public perception of its incompatibility with the Dutch way of life.

Of social hierarchy: economic issues, fluid hierarchy, and stagnant policies

As I had explained earlier, with regard to the discourse of social hierarchy, there are three major features that relate to the heuristics of ressentiment: a) the feeling of powerlessness, b) tendency to make social comparisons, and c) the perception of impotency. Correspondingly, the analytical focus in this section is on: a) the economic issues related to immigration, b) the fluid nature of socioeconomic hierarchy, and c) the difficulty of anti-Islamic individuals and groups to affect a change within Dutch government policies.

The economics of immigration

With regard to economic issues there are two prominent factors that significantly influence the public support for anti-immigration parties: an individual's socioeconomic position (Betz, 1994, 2002; Givens, 2004; Lewis-Beck & Mitchell, 1993; van der Brug, Fennema, & Tillie, 2000), and the individual's assessment of his personal and national economic situation (Betz, 2002; Lewis-Beck & Mitchell, 1993; van der Brug & Fennema, 2003). It is indeed the case that an "unfavorable economic situation makes people more likely to turn against foreigners or immigrants based on a belief that these groups threaten economic security" (Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007b, p.407) and this leads to increased support for anti-immigration parties such as LPF and PVV. Unemployment rate, thus, becomes an important factor in this scenario and studies have shown that there exists a positive correlation between a high unemployment rate and an increased public support for anti-immigration parties (see Anderson, 1996; Jackman & Volpert, 1996).

In the Netherlands, immigration has continuously been on the rise since 2005 and as of 2011 there were approximately 760,400 foreign nationals living in the Netherlands (Statistics Netherlands, 2011). Moreover, the unemployment rate has also been steadily rising and is now 6.2 percent in comparison to 3.4 percent in 2009 (Statistics Netherlands, 2012). This concomitant rise in the number of immigrants and unemployment rate leads to an increased sense of competition amongst the citizens (partly owing to the Euro crisis as well). It is this competitive urge amidst the perceived economic (and cultural) threat from immigrants that leads to the feeling of powerlessness amongst certain Dutch citizens, particularly with regard to the process of progressing up the socioeconomic hierarchy. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, a high unemployment rate coupled with a large number of immigrants in the country has a strong impact on the support for anti-immigration right-wing parties. Within this context, the conditions in the Netherlands – 760,400 foreign nationals and a 6.2 percent unemployment rate – are definitely ripe for people to perceive a socioeconomic threat from immigrants, leading to increased support for politicians such as Wilders – evident in his success in the past two elections.

Netherland's fluid socioeconomic hierarchy [61]

The fact that Netherlands has a fluid socioeconomic hierarchy needs little or no explanation. To a large extent Netherlands has witnessed a large scale exposure to information ranging from open access to government reports and policy documents, to inside stories on the public and private lives of politicians such as Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali, and Wilders. Moreover, the increased accessibility to information provided by the news media and internet further fosters the act of making social comparisons. This increasing frequency of social comparisons, according to Scheler, clearly facilitates the origins of ressentiment.

The stagnant government policies

Finally, in the discourse of actions I have already explained that the anti-Islamic individuals and groups in the Netherlands have mostly been unable to affect a significant change with regard to the perceived threat from Islam. Immigration is still quite prominent within Netherlands and apart from the brief

[61] While explicating particular features of the societal environment in contemporary sociotechnical democratic societies, I have already dealt extensively with this point at a more general level. Therefore, I have kept the explanation short, and the reader may refer back to Chapter 2 subsection – *Social Structure: the fluid nature of hierarchy favors comparisons* for further clarification.

success of LPF, Verdonk, and Hirsi Ali, things have largely been the same. The government policies with regard to immigration and integration have mostly been stagnant; although, things have changed a bit with the recent success of PVV in the last two general elections. Nonetheless, within the perceived economic and cultural threat from immigrants and with the fluid nature of socioeconomic hierarchy fostering everyday comparisons – the anti-Islamic groups in the Netherlands are yet to bring about a definite policy change. The blockage to carry out the immediate reactive impulse (of banishing all immigrants) and the inability to modify the external factors (government policies) leads to the fostering of a sense of vulnerability amongst these social groups (see Carle, 2006; Vink, 2007). Thus, the stagnant nature of immigration policies in conjugation with a high unemployment rate and a large number of immigrants constantly reinforces the impotency of these anti-Islamic individuals and social groups.

With this I conclude the analysis of the discourse of social hierarchy. The analysis has shown that the factors in the Dutch discourse of social hierarchy clearly parallel the heuristics of ressentiment. Netherlands exhibits a fluid socioeconomic hierarchy that fosters socioeconomic and cultural comparisons amongst social groups. This fluid nature is further facilitated by the advent of news media and internet technologies. Moreover, there is clearly a trace of competition between the native Dutch and the incoming immigrants. Within the welfare state ideology and the increasing impact of the Euro crisis, certain Dutch individuals are now finding it increasingly difficult to progress up within the socioeconomic hierarchy. A high unemployment rate coupled with the large intake of immigrants, as I have shown, may further foster the origins of ressentiment. Moreover, the desire of anti-Islamic groups to banish the Muslim immigrants from the country has met will little or no success and the Dutch immigration policies stand more or less stagnant. Although the Dutch ideals of tolerance and multiculturalism have been affected at a certain level, they still form a dominant part of Dutch sociopolitical and cultural landscape.

Of social outreach: whose integration is it anyway?

This section deals with the discourse of social outreach and focuses on two major factors: a) the ways in which anti-Islamic individuals and social groups in the Netherlands come together, and b) the nature of the individuals and social groups that are prone to the anti-Islamic behavior. Whereas the first factor is concerned with the ways in which the hostility towards Islam and immigrants is mobilized within Dutch society, both at an individual and at the political level, the second factor highlights the liminality that is portrayed by these anti-Islamic individuals and social groups by highlighting the perceived incompatibility with Islam.

Mobilizing ressentiment: connecting the people at the individual level

A perceived national crisis often brings citizens together. Such a crisis was clearly played out with the assassination of Fortuyn in 2002. Following his death, "hundreds of thousands made their way to […the] commemorative sites" (Margary, 2007, p.109). While some of these commemoratives sites were internet-based, most of them were physical spaces. Although in the Netherlands the practice of setting up public condolence registers on the internet are common "upon the death of high-ranking individuals or members of the royal house" (p.113), a large number of these registers also came about following Fortuyn's death. The ease of posting a comment from one's house and the feature of anonymity provided by the web even led to "racist or fascist remarks in some cases" (Ibid.). To put it succinctly, these commemorative sites "served as vehicles for disclosing political criticism, resentment, and hatred"

(p.120). The issue was no longer just the death of a politician and instead the Dutch people took this as an "opportunity to criticize politicians and governments about immigration and integration, lack of safety and bureaucracy" (Ibid.). These sites not only became "active arenas of resentment" (p.121) but also "reinforced the suggestion of broad social discontent" (Ibid.). Margary (2007) rightly notes that these sites had a twofold function: "as monuments of mourning but especially as hearths of resentment and protest" (p.130). A similar, but less pronounced, public behavior was also visible when van Gogh was murdered (see Jusová, 2008; Pritchard & Clement, 2004; Rovers, 2004; de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005).

Moreover, with the advent of anti-Islamic websites, blogs, forums, and video channels on the internet not only are people more exposed to such social and political opinions but also are more aware of the presence of other people who may share the same opinions as them. These sites often become a way to not only disseminate and consume knowledge about Islam but also conjure and mobilize like-minded people (Chadwick & Howard, 2009). With regard to movies such as *Submission* and *Fitna*, I have already shown that the visual culture of internet "is clearly capable of overcoming the communicative barriers between countries and of giving voices to a plurality of cosmopolitanisms that far exceeds the diversity of voices typically found in traditional, nationally circumscribed media" (Zoonen et al., 2011, p.19). Thus, the anti-Islamic individuals and social groups in the Netherlands not only come together in perceived national crises but also are exposed to each other because of the ease of social connectivity provided by internet tools. Furthermore, at a political level, the Dutch Vote Advice Applications (VAAs) facilitate the mobilization of such groups within the electorate.

Mobilizing ressentiment: connecting the people at the political level

VAAs are online technological artifacts that aid the electorate in formulating a choice between political parties in an election. Based on a user's answers to a fixed set of questions related to economic and cultural policies, VAAs help the user determine the similarity between his own ideology and that of the competing political parties. VAAs such as VoteMatch and VoteCompass are quite popular in the Netherlands.[62] VoteMatch went online in 1998 and since then "it appears to be one of the most influential Web sites at election time[s]" (Zoonen, Ridder, & Hirzalla, 2010, p.2). Although the Dutch institute for Political Participation has developed a large number of VAAs, VoteMatch continues to be the people's favorite, receiving the "Dutch Machiavelli Award for being the most important innovation in political communication" (Ibid.). VoteMatch, as the name suggests, takes the user input in the form of objective answers to policy questions and then produces a table depicting the similarity of the answers with that given by the political parties – thereby providing the user with a 'match'.

VoteCompass, on the other hand, was created in 2006 as a response to the state-sponsored VoteMatch, which was heavily criticized for oversimplifying the political landscape. The complaint seemed quite legitimate because in the build-up to the 2006 elections "consultations of VoteMatch resulted conspicuously more often in an advice for an extreme right or an extreme left wing party" (Ibid.). Therefore, in 2006 a group of "dissatisfied political scientists" (Ibid.) launched VoteCompass. As the name suggests, VoteCompass does not simply produce a match but provides the user with a slightly more nuanced result. Based on three dimensions – government policies, party leaders, and the

[62] VoteMatch for 2006 elections (archived): http://www.stemwijzer.nl/votematch2k2006/index.html,
VoteMatch for the 2012 elections: http://www.stemwijzer.nl/TweedeKamer2010/index.html#/stelling/1, and
VoteCompass for 2006 elections: http://tweedekamer.kieskompas.nl/

performance of the last cabinet – VoteCompass displays the position of the individual in a two-dimensional graph.[63] These web tools were quite popular in the Dutch 2006 elections – both VoteMatch and VoteCompass were used by more than 3 million unique visitors each (Zoonen, Ridder, et al., 2010).

A detailed analysis of VoteMatch and VoteCompass is beyond the scope of this section.[64] However, the existence and popularity of these technologies has an interesting correlation with the heuristics of ressentiment. Such technologies – providing either a political *match* or a *compass* – enforce objectivity on the highly subjective realms of politics, culture, economics and society. Moreover, these technologies fail to take into account an important factor: the cultural, social, and economic background of the user (Ramonaite, 2010; Williamson, 2010; Zoonen, Ridder, et al., 2010). Within such an isolated context, these technologies become yet another indirect political mechanism to facilitate the mobilization of like-minded individuals by Dutch political parties, especially by anti-immigration parties such as PVV who rely on their populistic appeal to the masses. Confronted with a number of choices in a multiparty election, a large number of users increasingly rely on such technologies (apart from the information in the news media and on the internet) and this further facilitates the political mobilization of, amongst other kinds, the anti-Islamic and anti-immigration individuals in the Netherlands. Although the particularities of the impact of VAAs cannot be gauged, with the success of Wilders in the 2006 and 2010 elections the public debate on immigration has prominently come on the political agenda, slowly turning towards the concept of 'integration' within the perceived 'Islamization' of Netherlands.

The liminality of the Dutch majority: 'integration'

As of today, within the Dutch public debate on integration the "way of life of immigrants is not considered to represent a striving to build a meaningful way of life […] but seen mainly as a product of their Islamic religion" (Vellenga, 2008, p.29). Islam is becoming more and more visible in the Netherlands and what is evidently clear is that the debate on immigration and integration has been 'Islamicized' (Cherribi, 2003; Sunier, 2005; Vellenga, 2008). In line with Wilder's critique of Islam, there now seems to be a widespread belief that Muslims are slowly and steadily becoming a majority within Europe. Figure 3 depicts a popular web infographic that lends insight into the perception of the Islamization of Europe.

Liminality, as I had stated earlier, is characterized by an anonymous transitional period in which a social group follows prescribed codes of conduct, and shows obedience and humility towards the subject of authority. Clearly, the anti-Islamic individuals and groups in the Netherlands perceive themselves within a state of liminality. The groups believe that Muslims and Islam must, and can be, banished out of the country – the contemporary period is treated as a degenerative transitional phase that can be overcome through policy reforms. The prescribed elite values of tolerance and multiculturalism by the government's welfare-state ideology define and delimit the actions of these anti-Islamic groups, and apart from a few small uprisings the Dutch people have relatively been peaceful towards the Muslim immigrants. Although the Dutch population enjoys the majority within Netherlands, certain social groups within it feel threatened by Muslim immigrants not only because of the perceived difference in culture, ideology, and sensibilities, but also because with the high levels of immigration in the country, these minorities would soon become a major part of the Dutch population. Thus, by framing the public

[63] One axis moves from 'conservative' to 'progressive', while the other between 'left' and 'right'.
[64] For a detailed analysis of both of these technological artifacts refer: Zoonen, Ridder, et al. (2010)

debate on immigration in terms of *culture*, these groups have characterized the immigration problem as being one of cultural integration, rather than of socioeconomics and mere assimilation. A perceived inherent disjuncture is portrayed between Islam and the Dutch way of life, leading the public to believe that the two are essentially irreconcilable.

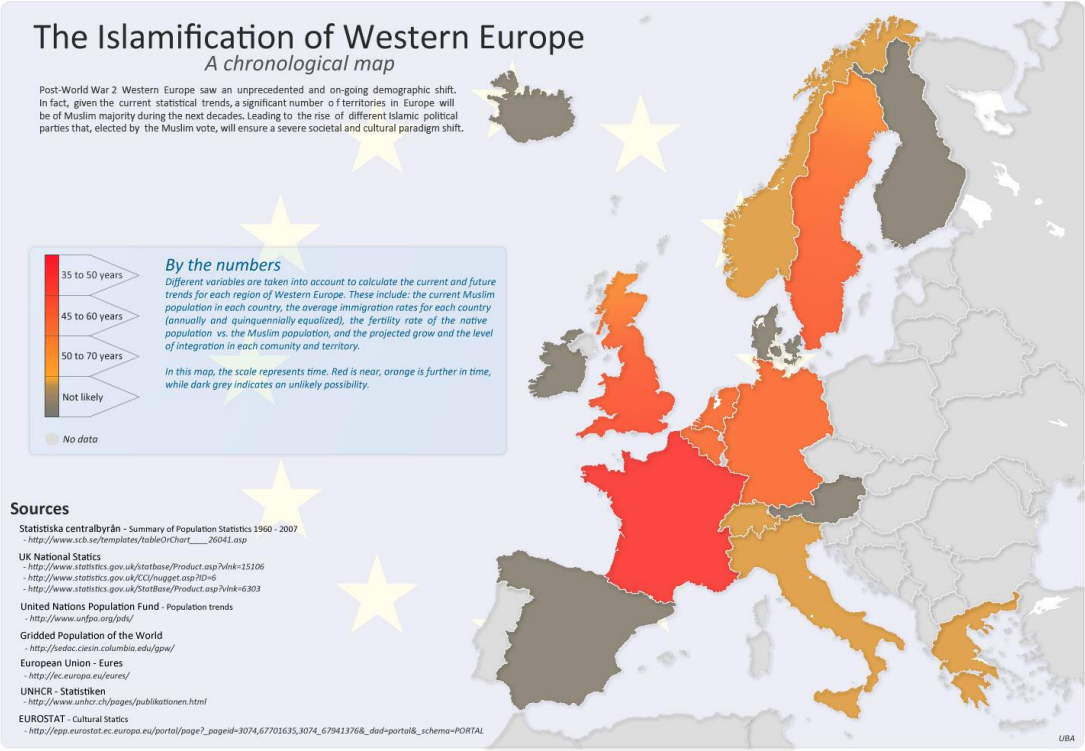

Figure 3: An infographic depicting the rise of Muslim population in Western Europe [65]

With this I conclude the discourse of social outreach. The heuristics of ressentiment are clearly visible here as well. Although with the increasing anti-Islamic and anti-integration Dutch political rhetoric, it can be assumed that the people face little difficulty in clearly articulating their feelings towards Islam. This is not only because of the plethora of anti-Islamic content on news media and the internet, but also because of the rise of anti-Islamic Dutch individuals such as Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali, van Gogh, and Wilders. Furthermore, these anti-Islamic individuals tend to come together not only at an individual but also at the political level. Moreover, the anti-Islamic Dutch social groups have taken a turn towards integration within the public debate on immigration. Demarcating their own liminality and portraying the immigrants primarily in the light of their religion (Islam), these anti-Islamic groups frame the problem as being one of integration – *Islam is incompatible with democracy*. Let us now move on to the last discourse of social institutions to inquire into the heuristics of ressentiment there.

Of social institutions: where is the welfare in the welfare state?

This sections deals with the discourse of social institutions within Netherlands. The focus here is not only on the Dutch ideals of political equality that exist alongside certain social and economic discrepancies but also on the increasing uptake of the issues of immigration and integration by Dutch political parties. In this section I will argue that the perceived disparity between an individual's political

[65] Source: http://namsla.wikidot.com/islam

status and his socioeconomic and cultural status leads to an environment in which the stability of the Dutch electorate is relatively unstable and erratic. Moreover, in such an environment there is a growing tendency to politicize issues in an ad-hoc manner depending on the popularity of the issue amongst the electorate.

Political equality amidst societal discrepancies

Within Netherlands there is a clear disjuncture between the Dutch ideals of multiculturalism and tolerance, and the perceived cultural incompatibility between Islam and the Dutch way of life. Politicians such as Fortuyn, Verdonk, Hirsi Ali, and Wilders have already articulated the futility of Article One in the wake of the threat posed by Islam. However, Article One still stands high within the Dutch constitution. Moreover, the acquittal of Wilders in the criminal trial was symbolic not so much of the victory of free speech but rather of the limits to it. Wilders' remarks have now become the barometer of free speech within Netherlands – *one can only say so much and not more*. Although his acquittal may have been acclaimed as a victory by the anti-Islamic individuals and social groups, it is also true that by labeling Wilders' remarks as being 'just on the line', the Dutch court has clearly articulated and defined the boundaries of free speech. Thus, Netherlands forms a typical example of a country where the political system is constantly trying to generate social equality while the people perceive a strong social and cultural discrepancy. Such an environment, as Scheler had mentioned, is highly conducive to ressentiment. Moreover, within this environment, the politicians are constantly getting on the anti-Islamic bandwagon in an attempt to capture the fragile electorate.

Fragile electorate and the anti-Islamic bandwagon: 'politics on Islam'

Coalitions are the norm in the Netherlands and the Dutch are yet to witness a single-party government (Andeweg & Irwin, 2002). Within this environment, the number of votes received by a party defines its stakes within the formation of the coalition. Party competition is "thus intense, with most of the votes fought at each election"(Oppenhuis, 1996, as cited in Semetko, 1998, p.141). However, the parties have to not only take into account the coalition aspect of Dutch politics but also the increasing fragility of the electorate (Kessel, 2010). Over the years a dissociative trend has developed within the Dutch electorate. This was clearly evident in the Dutch Parliamentary Election Study of 2002, in which "only 29 percent of the voters indicated they had always voted for the same party, compared to 34 percent in 1998, 38 percent in 1994, 50 percent in 1986, and even 69 percent in 1971" (van Holsteyn & Irwin, 2003, p.52). Over the years, the Netherlands "has been 'hit' by increasing voter instability and decreasing party loyalty" (van Praag & Adriaansen, 2011, p.201). Clearly the electorate is more volatile than it once was and the political parties have to prove their worth to the electorate in every election.

Until 2002 Dutch political parties had been quite reluctant "to interject the 'foreigner' issues into electoral politics" (van Holsteyn & Irwin, 2003, p.62). The surprising political success of LPF "in spite of the loss of seats in the elections of 2003, propelled immigration and integration to the top of the political agenda" (Bos & Brug, 2010, p.782). One of the first moves by Balkenende, when he came to power in 2002, was to "announce that his party would follow a harder line towards asylum seekers" (van Holsteyn & Irwin, 2003, p.45). It was not just the major parties that were influenced by LPF's success and Dutch politics witnessed "several other politicians […who claimed] to be heirs of the legacy of Pim Fortuyn and […founded] their own party[66] in the hopes of following in his footsteps" (Ibid.). Since Fortuyn, the

[66] Examples of such parties include the post-LPF party LVF, PVN (Party for the Netherlands), PVV, and EenNL (One NL).

immigration and integration issue has been a key feature in the election campaigns – the prime example of this is the success of Wilders. Owing to the increasing influence of the cultural dimension on the voting behavior of the electorate, "many [Dutch political] parties have recently started to present a clearer image of themselves on the cultural dimension" (van Praag & Adriaansen, 2011, p.204).

With this I conclude the analysis of the discourse of social institutions. Once again the heuristics of ressentiment are clearly in line with the features of Dutch social institutions with regard to Scheler's sociology of ressentiment. The Dutch welfare society clearly promotes social equality while certain citizens perceive a strong social, cultural, and economic discrepancy between 'us' (native Dutch) and 'them' (Muslim immigrants). Moreover, earlier in the discourse of actions I had shown that these anti-immigration individuals and social groups have clearly defined Islam as the subject responsible for their felt injury. Although the heuristics of ressentiment towards Islam could not be discerned within mainstream Dutch political parties, nonetheless the fragile nature of the electorate and the success of PVV have led the mainstream political parties to jump on the populistic bandwagon characterized by an anti-Islam rhetoric. Clearly the symptoms favor the origins of ressentiment. The next section summarizes the findings of the analysis of the heuristics of ressentiment within the five discourses.

The Symptoms of Ressentiment: Intolerance towards the Intolerant

It was the 1990 WRR report that lay down a strong immigrant policy based on the demographics of the Dutch immigration problem – an issue that was expounded later by Frits Bolkestein, the leader of VVD, in 1991. Bolkestein asserted that "the Dutch government in applying its immigration policy should follow, without restraint, only Western liberal values" (Vellenga, 2008, p.21). Since then Bolkestein's views have come a full circle and become an important part of Dutch politics, and politicians such as Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali, Verdonk, and Wilders have attacked the notion of Dutch tolerance and multiculturalism by voicing strong critiques not only of the Dutch immigration policies but also of the ideology of Islam in general. Immigrants are not only seen "as a strain on society's resources" (Ibid.) but also as people who are "unwilling or culturally and socially incapable of integrating into Dutch society" (Ibid.).

Since the 1990s, "the grammar of disregard has been replaced […] by a grammar of polarization" (Vellenga, 2008, p.34). As I have shown in my analysis, the contemporary Dutch sociopolitical and cultural discourse is colored with the perceived cultural incompatibility between Islam and western values. What becomes evident is that within the public debate on immigration the focus has shifted from economics of the labor immigrants to the culture of Islam. Islam, portrayed as an anti-democratic religion, is seen to be largely incompatible with the Dutch way of life. A definite injury is felt by certain Dutch groups not so much in terms of socioeconomics but more in terms of a threat to the Dutch way of life and to democratic ideals such as the freedom of expression. Moreover, a sense of justification with regard to the hostility and discontent is clearly discernable not only within the emancipatory lens where the Qur'an is seen as a fallacious book promoting the subjugation of women but also within the dominant understanding that hard-earned ideals of tolerance, gay and lesbian right, and free speech are under threat.

Faced with the realization that the immigrants were here to stay and that "a great many of them had their origins in Muslim rather than Christian countries, […the Dutch] viewed [Muslim] immigrants as a threat to their ethnic, religious, and cultural traditions" (Stearns & Chapman, 1992, p.398). To make

matters more complex, the incoming immigrants "remained ambivalent about just how far they wished to go in assimilating into the European cultural mainstream" (p.400). Within such an environment, the Dutch "found it difficult to embrace the kind of cultural pluralism that a full acceptance of the non-European [, especially Muslim,] minority would entail" (Ibid.). Moreover, the desire of certain anti-Islamic social groups to either restrict the flow of immigrants completely or to banish them altogether has met with relatively less success. Moreover, over time within the everyday Dutch society, the perceived powerlessness and impotency of the anti-Islamic groups is constantly reinforced in the wake of the dominant Dutch tradition of tolerance and multiculturalism. Netherlands still remains one of the most multicultural, international and tolerant society in the world – a fact that these groups have to live with every day.

Fennema (1997) defines anti-immigration parties as political parties sharing the common denominator of "resentment against migrants and the immigration policy of their governments" (p.474). Such a shared denominator is clearly visible in the Dutch debate on immigration in which

> "a new 'us/them'- distinction came to the forefront, in which 'us' was identified as those who shared a common history and common core values such as democracy, freedom, equality and tolerance, and 'them' was identified as Muslim immigrants who came from another culture and followed a religion which propagated submission, subordination and intolerance" (Vellenga, 2008, p.34).

The constant reiteration of this cultural and ideological divide was facilitated by certain Dutch politicians. This led to the framing of the immigration problem in the light of cultural incompatibility and a vast difference in sensibilities as opposed to the earlier socioeconomic dimension. Moreover, as I have shown, the anti-Islamic and anti-integration vernacular of Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali, Verdonk, and Wilders, soon became a part of the larger anti-Islamic political bandwagon within Netherlands. Clearly, the analysis showed that the Dutch sociopolitical, cultural, and economic landscape is indeed characterized by many symptoms of the origins and facilitation of ressentiment.

Moreover, as I have shown, it is not just the politicians who are influencing the Dutch sociocultural landscape. The anti-Islamic environment within Netherlands is shaped and influenced by a large number of factors – politicians being just one of them. The worldwide denouncing of Islam post 9-11, the rise of right-wing parties in rest of Europe, and the economic issues pertaining to immigration – all played a significant role in shaping the Dutch public debate on immigration. Be it the French ban on the Islamic face veil (Fraser, 2011) or the German court's ruling against the circumcision of Muslim and Jewish children (Kulish, 2012) – visible signs of an increasing discontent and antagonism towards Islam are on display throughout Western Europe. Moreover, this us/them divide is not only limited to the immigration of Muslims in the Netherlands but has instead grown to a more general skepticism toward the others. This is clearly evident not only by the fact that on June 1, 2005 "the Dutch population en masse rejected the European constitution in a poll" (Ibid.) but also through the popularity of Wilders' contemporary anti-Euro and anti-Europe political campaign. The symptoms of ressentiment are clear and the news media, internet, and other technologies have indeed played a significant role in its origin, facilitation, and mobilization.

For a long time Nationalism was not a big issue in Netherlands and it was common for the Dutch to not be proud of their national identity (Van Ginkel, 1999, as cited in Vellenga, 2008, p.30). However, it all changed in the 21st century starting with Fortuyn's cultural critique of immigration in

particular and Islam in general. There was a renewed sense of nationalism within the Dutch and various opinion leaders "advocated strengthening people's awareness of their national identity and fortifying their feeling of national pride" (p.30). Within this new nationalism, the advocated national identity was "strongly contrasted to the identity of Muslim immigrants [with] a sharp distinction […] made within the Dutch population between 'us' and 'them' […], between 'the Dutch' and 'the Muslims'" (p.30-31). Furthermore, as is evident from Wilder's current election campaign, "this new nationalism is [now] given […an alternative] profile by constructing a strong opposition between the Netherlands on the one hand and the European Union on the other hands" (p.31). The deep-seated resentment and hostility towards Islam, parallel to a sense of powerlessness and impotency, is indeed growing in both scope and size.

With this I conclude this chapter. The analysis of the Dutch debate on immigration has indeed showcased quite a few important points with regard to the theoretical heuristics of ressentiment. The clear identification of the ideology of Islam as the subject responsible for the societal problems went hand in hand with an inherent sense of nationalism and justification. With the advent of online mass media and news media, an indirect tinkering with reality becomes the dominant mode of understanding other social groups, and the increased exposure to information facilitated the act of making comparisons. The increasing political uptake of cultural and integration issues regarding immigrants, along with the problematization of such issues in the press, clearly has ramifications for the Dutch public opinion on Islam. A prolonged and growing sense of hostility in conjugation with the denigration of the elite ideals of tolerance and multiculturalism inverts the value hierarchy as a basis for the legitimacy of ressentiment. Indeed, a sense of liminality takes birth within the symptomatic emergence of ressentiment towards Islam. The September 2012 Dutch elections will not only lend an insight into the future of the Dutch sociopolitical and cultural landscape but also decide what becomes of the symptoms of ressentiment. The next chapter deals with the import of ICTs for the social shaping of the Dutch public opinion towards Islam, and will also analyze the role and significance of such technologies for the origins, facilitation, and mobilization of ressentiment in light of Scheler's work.

5

ICTs and the Sociology of Ressentiment

> "The open society, the unrestricted access to knowledge, the unplanned and uninhibited association of men for its furtherance – these are what may make a vast, complex, ever growing, ever changing, ever more specialized, and expert technological world – nevertheless a world of human community." (Oppenheimer, 1953, p.94)

In the above quote, J. Robert Oppenheimer, an American physicist and co-founder of the World Academy of Arts and Science, outlined the future of the relationship between the advent of technology and its impact on society. He argued that although the expanding, specialized, and altering nature of a technological world may significantly shape the society we live in, it is nonetheless a world of human beings involved in their everyday practices. To put it succinctly, underlining the role and significance of the human practices of information dissemination and public association, Oppenheimer highlights the import of human actors and suggests that even a technological order is essentially an exercise in the sociology of information and communication. This understanding of the interdependence between society and technology has become a prominent tenet within STS.

STS emphasizes the importance of 'culture' and 'context' in the construction and cognizance of shared knowledge. It asserts that social groups construct, shape, and influence a culture of shared artifacts through which they create, debate, and disseminate common meanings (see Pinch & Bijker, 1984; Wacjman & MacKenzie, 1999). Such a shared culture of meaning-making has strong implications for the (re)shaping of public opinion within any democratic public debate. The significance of these implications is even more pronounced within contemporary sociotechnical democracies marked with the rapid insurgence of novel and prominent forms of communication owing primarily to the digital revolution (see Chadwick, 2006; Chadwick & Howard, 2009; Sclove, 1995). Boczkowski & Lievrouw (2007) highlight the import of ICTs for the societal process of meaning-making by asserting that these technologies are indeed "the backbone of social, economic, and cultural life" (p.949). This is evident in the fact that "[b]logging, social networking sites, multiple digital platforms, satellite television, and mobile communications devices and applications offer constantly expanding means by which residents of Europe have been able to communicate, engage personally and emotionally with each other, and participate in the democratic debates in national and European networks" (Blaagard, 2010, p.2).

One such example of a democratic debate – the Dutch public debate on immigration – has been analyzed in this thesis. The analysis has shown the symptomatic emergence and existence of ressentiment towards Islam within Dutch society. Within Scheler's sociology, the birth of ressentiment is grounded within two interconnected processes: a) the cognizance of a felt injury or loss, and b) the clear identification of the subject responsible for the injury. The reinforcing of ressentiment, on the other hand, depends either explicitly on an increased exposure to the dominant value system or more intuitively on the exposure to information that reiterates the powerlessness and impotency of the ressenting individual. Moreover, the process of mobilizing ressentiment, as I have shown, depends upon the ways in which people reach out, communicate, and form associations with each other. Each of these processes in turn depends on the ways in which people perceive reality, formulate their opinions, and

develop associations. It is within this dependence that the role and significance of communication technologies for shaping and influencing public opinion becomes important for the sociology of ressentiment – for there is a strong sense of reciprocity between the sociology of ressentiment and the sociology of information and communication within a society (see Morelli, 1998; Nietzsche, 1996; Risse, 2003; Scheler, 1992, 2003).

Owing to the overlaps between the five discourses, it is difficult to pinpoint the implications of communication technologies on the theoretical heuristics within particular discourses. However, by highlighting particular features of communication technologies, the analysis in this chapter will portray the role and significance of ICTs in: a) disseminating, shaping and influencing the opinions of ressenting individuals and social groups in the Netherlands, and b) facilitating the mobilization of these individuals. The aim of this chapter, thus, is to demarcate and highlight the implications of the features of news media and internet technologies for the sociology of ressentiment by showcasing their import for contemporary sociology of information and communication.

Salient features of ICTs and Ressentiment

The advent of new forms of technological communication, especially that of internet, has been given a prominent focus within the sociology of information and communication.[67] The advent of new communication technologies, such as the internet, "has often been greeted as a revolutionary development that will transform political life, foster greater civic engagement and pave the way to a global public sphere" (Zoonen, Vis, & Mihelj, 2011, p.614). On the other hand, there are scholars who assert that these technologies are only used by active and engaged citizens, and thus there are limitations to their influence on the sociopolitical and cultural landscape (e.g., Chadwick, 2006; Chadwick & Howard, 2009). However, my focus within this chapter is not on the novelty of these technologies but rather on their ability to make certain aspects salient within the human practices of information dissemination and public association.

The new forms of communication and association rendered possible by ICTs "has provided an additional layer of communication that rests atop the mass media, draws from it, and in turn influences it" (Balkin, 2004, p.9). "The editorial power held by journalists and editors – the gate-keeper role – is, of late, dispersed to a billion mobile phone users, bloggers and webmasters" (p.4). Transnational communication of information used to happen long before the internet came about; however, with the advent of the internet the effort and resources required for transmitting information is greatly reduced. Whether these technologies mark revolutionary innovations is debatable; however, it is indeed clear that these technologies make certain attributes salient within the practices of dissemination of information and public association. It is on the import of such features of ICTs, for the social shaping of public opinion within the Dutch public debate, that the focus of this chapter lies.[68] In this chapter, I argue that mass media did, in fact, play a substantive role in shaping, fostering, and mobilizing the ressentiment of

[67] For an in-depth sociological analysis of such technologies, refer to: Castells (2000a, 2000b, 2004).

[68] At the very onset, I would also like to cater to a general criticism regarding the analysis of the role of communication technologies especially the ones on the internet. Critics usually argue that there still exists a digital divide with close to 90% of the world still being 'offline' (Blaagard, 2010). In this regard, I would like to point out that within Netherlands the divide is far less pronounced. This is evident by – as I have shown earlier – the fact that 90% of the Dutch population has an online presence, close to 70% of the households have broadband access, and the sale of computing devices far exceeds that of a lot of other electronic equipments (Semetko, 1998).

certain Dutch anti-Islamic individuals and groups. The aim of the analysis in this chapter is to sketch out the salient implications of ICTs for the sociology of ressentiment using the empirics of the Dutch case study. The next three sections provide an analysis of three salient attributes of ICTs: a) the first section deals with the rapid growth of information owing to ICTs, b) the second section focuses on their far-reaching communicative features, and c) finally the third section lends an insight into the correlative nature of ICTs.

The mutual shaping of ressentiment and technology: a precautionary remark

Before I begin the analysis of ICTs, I would like to explicate a particular understanding with regard to the relationship between ICTs and the sociology of ressentiment. To say that the relationship between ICTs and ressentiment is characterized only by a one-way directionality – 'technologies influence ressentiment' – would be wrong. STS has long asserted that one of the prime fallacies of the analyses of the influence of technologies on society is that such analyses usually end up as narratives suggesting some form of technological determinism in which technology is seen as the primary driver of societal changes (see Pinch & Bijker, 1984; Wacjman & MacKenzie, 1999; Wyatt, 2007). Translating it within the context of this chapter, an example of such an outlook would be the understanding that the decentralized nature of the internet and the technologically-enabled amplification of outreach provided by ICTs lead to the fostering of ressentiment. Although I cannot discount the influence of these technological attributes on the sociology of ressentiment, it must be kept in mind that a technological order is also a world of human beings involved in their everyday practices.

Owing to the focus on the 'salient features' of these technologies, the analysis in this chapter expounds on the influence of technology on the sociology of information and communication. However, in line with Oppenheimer's quote in the beginning of this chapter, it must indeed be kept in mind that the import of these technologies for the public practices of information generation and public association is not one sided. Although technology provides certain salient features, the practice of these technologies by users in turn influences the way these technologies are perceived and used. Whereas the research in this chapter is focused on the very nature and attributes of ICTs, further research particularly focused on the content of these technologies can definitely lend an insight into this mutual interdependence. In this regard, the reader must note that it is because of the nature of my focus point and research question that the narrative of this chapter is dominantly one-sided.

Decentralization Online and Inflation of Information

The focus in this section is on the process of decentralization of information facilitated by the advent of new communication technologies, such as blogs, forums and video sites. I will argue that the decentralized dimension of these technologies in turn fosters public engagement with information by accentuating user-generated content.[69] This user-emphasis enables the people to produce and disseminate large volumes of decentralized content, leading to and facilitating the inflation of information. I will conclude this section by arguing that because of this decentralized increase of

[69] The phrase 'user-generated content' usually refers to the user content of blogs, videos, tweets, social networking and more. However, in this chapter, with regard to the sociotechnical shaping of ressentiment, I would like to point out to the reader that within my usage the phrase also encompasses certain complete websites such as the ones disseminating the anti-Islam rhetoric.

information people become more exposed to information sources. Such an exposure can not only facilitate the origins of ressentiment but also help reinforce it.[70]

The growth of decentralized information

If the old school culture of radio, printing press, television, and compact discs, created the initial technological mesh of information generation and communication, the internet, at the very least, can be seen as "overlaying a new communication infrastructure onto […the] existing communication processes" (Weare, 2002, p.667). Such changes in the manner in which "information and entertainment media are produced and distributed have an enormous impact on their role in society" (Raboy, 2003, p.102). The advent of news media, internet, and other technologies has facilitated the "decentralization of the [societal and] political communication process" (Brown, 2011, p.59), making the process of political journalism "more challenging and [leading to an increase in] the volume of coverage" (Ibid.). With the term 'decentralization' I refer specifically to the process of 'power diffusion' whereby the authority of traditional news media houses, such as newspapers, and state broadcasting associations is weakened in a user-centric information society (see Farrell & Drezner, 2007; Stewart, Mazzoleni, & Horsfield, 2003; van Dijk, 1995). The internet has come about as "the first modern communication medium that expands its reach by decentralizing the capital structure of production and distribution of information, culture, and knowledge" (Benkler, 2006, p.30). In today's sociotechnical world where the traditional news media such as newspapers and television channels are supposed to disseminate 'top-down' information, the internet is claimed to be decreasing the threshold for active societal and political participation on part of the citizens by facilitating 'bottom-up' interaction.

Such 'bottom-up' interaction is evident not only within social forums that enable transnational discussions on social, political, cultural, and economic issues but also through the emergence of popular alternative news media sites such as OpenDemocracy[71], NowPublic[72], and Global Voices Online[73] as manifestations of citizen journalism. People now "feel that they are stakeholders and want to express their engagement" (Ibid.) because they feel as if they are 'affected by principle' and should have a say in any 'true' public debate (Frazer, 2007). The citizens want "news and information that is autonomous and informed" (Buruma, 2010) and within such an ideology the "border-circumventing, highly visual digital technologies […are perceived as making] such participation easier" (Zoonen, Vis, & Mihelj, 2010, p.259). This participation is further fostered by the new forms of online communication that reduce the costs of replicating and transmitting information. Subsequently, a large number of people "can [now] broadcast and publish their views cheaply and widely" (Balkin, 2004, p.6).

Moreover, this technology-enabled decentralization has also influenced the processes of information analysis in addition to those of information generation and dissemination. The effect can clearly be seen on the influence of ICT's "on the tabulation and analysis of data such as votes and census results, transforming these activities from highly centralized, elite processes to decentralized and common activities" (Weare, 2002, p.666). Such an analysis is now possible not only because of the accessibility provided by the large-scale exposure to information but also because "more groups [now]

[70] It must be stressed here that the analytical focus in this section is *not* on a detailed analysis of the very content of communication, such as on blogs and in videos, but rather on the exposure to a multiplicity of information sources (mainstream and otherwise) and the nature of content to which the Dutch citizenry is exposed to.
[71] Link: http://www.opendemocracy.net/
[72] Link: http://www.nowpublic.com/
[73] Link: http://globalvoicesonline.org/

have access to the computing capabilities to analyze large quantities of voter registration, geographic, and census data" (Ibid.). Such an increase in the capability of the users to analyze large volumes of information further facilitates the production and dissemination of new forms of information. The circulation and popularity of web info-graphics such as the ones depicting the rise of right-wing European parties, or the Islamification of Western Europe, being a case in point. The internet is perceived as a technology that decreases "the influence of traditional information aggregators such as major news organizations and empower[s] new aggregators, such as [particular] interest groups [and individuals]" (p.669). People are now more equipped to gather, analyze, and disseminate information, "thereby extending the scope of information aggregation in terms of the type of information gathered and of the political [and societal] actors who employ the information" (Ibid.).

Moreover, "by continuing the trend towards decentralized data processing [, dissemination, and analysis] the Internet also increases information access" (Ibid.) and has "allowed for information to no longer be anywhere near as scarce, at least among those with access to internet" (Miller & Unity, 2008). This inflation of information, coupled with the ever-increasing emphasis on the freedom of expression within democratic societies, has "reshape[d], however imperceptibly, cultural conventions about what things mean, what is proper and improper, what is important and less important, how things are done and how they are not done" (Balkin, 2004, p.5). Citizens exercise their freedom of expression "through communicative interaction, through expression, through exchange, [...and] become the architects of their culture, building on what others did before them and shaping the world that will shape them and those who follow them" (Ibid.). Mass media has thus come to become an important factor not only in explicating public opinion but also in "representing and shaping [the] cultural values in a society" (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005, p.325). However, "one of the side effects of these developments [with regard to the large scale exposure to information] is that they also led to an increased awareness of social heterogeneity. Cultural diversity becomes increasingly salient, not only across borders but also within them" (Veldhuis & Bakker, 2009, p.27). As I had shown in the previous chapter, the Dutch population is exposed to a large amount of information with regard to Islam. The next subsections will highlight the implications of such an awareness of social heterogeneity for the sociology of ressentiment using the empirics of the Dutch case study.

Blogs and anti-Islamic websites

Within sociotechnical societies blogging provides not only a publicly accessible technological alternative to personal diaries and mémoires but also a means to express one's opinion on political, social, cultural, and economic matters. Despite the informal nature of blogging, "the common consensus is that blogs play an increasingly important role as a forum of public debate, with knock-on consequences for the media, politics, and policy" (Farrell & Drezner, 2007, p.16). A detailed analysis of the content and impact of anti-Islamic and anti-integration blogs is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the fact that prominent Dutch populistic politicians such as Hirsi Ali and Wilders maintain their own blogs showcases, at the very least, the existence of online 'decentralized yet political' sources of the critique of integration and Islam – characterizing an extension to 'media freedom' (Coleman, 2005). In a world where 140-character tweets are gaining rapid popularity, Wilders is also quite active on Twitter and has

close to 200,000 followers.[74] Moreover, in addition to blogs by politicians, as I have already shown, there are also a large number of anti-Islamic websites on the internet.[75]

Furthermore, the way in which religious fundamentalists utilize the internet has an impact not only on the fundamentalist communities themselves but also on the ways in which society perceives their culture and religion (Barzilai-Nahon & Barzilai, 2005; Ettinger & Udris, 2009). With regard to the religion of Islam, sociological research has shown that there exists a strong correlation between the way Islamic community is represented within mass media and the subsequent societal perception of Islam (see Eickelman & Anderson, 2003; Hoover & Clark, 2002; Mandaville, 1999). Furthermore, this influence of mass media and online content is not just restricted to citizens, but also outreaches towards political and policy institutions (see Bink & D'Haenens, 2006; Brinks, 2005; Cherribi, 2003; Marsden & Savigny, 2009; Sunier, 2005; WRR, 2006). As mentioned in the previous chapter, in addition to blogs and books there are several anti-Islamic websites on the internet that accumulate and disseminate large amounts of information pertaining to the alleged threat from Islam and its incompatibility with the West. Some of the most prominent anti-Islamic websites are AnsweringIslam, Jihad Watch, and Gates of Vienna[76]. Furthermore, the Dutch public is also exposed to prominent online Muslim forums frequented by the Dutch immigrants of Turkish and Moroccan descent where the youth discuss and debate sociopolitical and religious issues (see Brouwer, 2004, 2006). Each of these sources provides further exposure to Muslim immigrants and to the religion of Islam. Furthermore, the nature of this exposure is not restricted to the textual realm but is increasingly marked with the rise of multimedia content online.

Multimedia content: films and media presence

The role and significance of the decentralized nature of the internet was clearly evident in the release of *Fitna* in March 2008. Although the Dutch national broadcasters refused to screen the movie, it had little bearing on its outreach and accessibility primarily due to the decentralized realm of the internet. Wilders did not need any broadcaster for his movie owing to the presence of video streaming sites such as YouTube and LiveLeak. The large number of hits (around 10 million) and comments (around 250,000) not only on the movie itself but also on the user reactions to it provide further evidence of the decentralized and inflated nature of online information and communication (Zoonen et al., 2010). Furthermore, the fact that the protests and public outburst to the movie were widely covered not only by the Dutch media but also by the international news media made *Fitna* trespass the Dutch borders and become an international affair (Ibid.). As I had mentioned earlier, a similar analysis of the exposure and impact of *Submission* is not available; however, the movie was not only a viral phenomenon on the internet but also an important influence on the Dutch public debate on immigration and Islam (see Ghorashi, 2003; Jusová, 2008; Snel & Stock, 2008).

Furthermore, as of today "political leaders […] are more visible to more people and more closely scrutinized" (Thompson, 2005, p.42). Within the Dutch parliamentary elections of 2002, Fortuyn (and later his assassination) had a substantive presence within news media and this affected not only the outcome of the elections but also the nature of the Dutch political discourse (Kessel, 2010; Margry,

[74] Source: http://twitter.com/geertwilderspvv (as on July 1, 2012)
[75] Additionally, Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali, and Wilders have also authored popular books criticizing the religion of Islam and the unintended consequences of immigration in Europe. Moreover, a quick search on any major online book store reveals a large range of books on Islam published by numerous authors worldwide. Most of these books are also available in an electronic form in addition to the usual print edition, thereby augmenting their outreach into the online realm as well.
[76] Link: http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.nl/

2003; van Holsteyn & Irwin, 2003). Similarly Wilders has also been enjoying a prominent share of news media coverage, case in point being the international exposure to *Fitna*, his criminal trial, and his popularity within the Dutch and American media in particular (Kahn, 2011a; Vossen, 2010b; van der Pas, de Vries, & van der Brug, 2011). A search on major video streaming sites for Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali, or Wilders, exposes an individual to a vast array of multimedia content including talk shows, interviews, public speeches, and debates. Both Hirsi Ali and Wilders have featured in famous programs on culture and politics, including British Broadcasting Corporation's flagship program *HARDtalk* and Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's international news show *On The Map*, in addition to participating in numerous political and cultural debates, and delivering public speeches.

However, such a pronounced and prominent "visibility created by the media […becomes] the source of a new and distinctive kind of *fragility*" (Thompson, 2005, p.42). The fragility I am referring to here is with regard to the position of politicians, such as Wilders, within the socioeconomic hierarchy. In addition to the fragility of the Dutch electorate, with the increased exposure to the public and private lives of such individuals, mass media creates a sense of vulnerability not only around their public perception but also around their political success (see Grönlund, 2007; Grönlund & Milner, 2006). This vulnerability, amidst the ever-increasing significance of mass media, necessitates further participation on the part of these politicians not only as active contributors but also as active listeners (Coleman, 2005, 2011; Farrell & Drezner, 2007; Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2009). Such a fragile relationship further facilitates the fluid nature of the socioeconomic and cultural hierarchy within contemporary sociotechnical societies with regard to the public perception of populistic politicians and their ideologies.

Inflation of information and the sociology of ressentiment

With regard to the sociology of ressentiment, the increased influence of mass media in the formulation and shaping of the societal culture has significantly influenced the process of meaning-making within sociotechnical societies. Through the analysis in this section it becomes clear that with regard to global controversies and issues in our contemporary sociotechnical world, "there are no 'citizens' in the traditional sense of inhabitants or members of a world polity" (Zoonen et al., 2010, p.259). With the increased exposure to information facilitated largely by these technologies people are now "exposed to all kinds of information, viewpoints, and ideas […, which] has had a revolutionary impact on public opinion" (Drache, 2008, p.90).

Although it will be wrong to say that mass media functions as the *only* source through which people formulate their opinions; however, by highlighting its growing influence in the production of cultures within sociotechnical societies, I have clearly shown that it plays a highly significant role in the way people perceive and interact with the world around them. The positive correlation between the portrayal of Islam online and its societal perception is one case in point. The other prominent case in point, as shown through the analysis in the previous two chapters of this thesis, is the existence, and indeed facilitation, of ressentiment within Dutch society towards Islam – a clear indicator of a prolonged hostility towards the ideology of Islam within the exposure to a mass-media centric socio-technical society.

Through the plethora of content on mass media people interface with reality, draw their own interpretations, and thus formulate their views. Mass media has come to become a significant factor within the social shaping of public opinion with regard to social, political, cultural, and economic issues

within sociotechnical societies (cf. Luhmann, 2000). Not only does it provide a multiplicity of sources through which people may be exposed to the motivations of ressentiment but also it brings to light the process of discerning beliefs and convictions through an indirect interfacing or tinkering with reality. As I had shown in the previous chapter, mass media has come to become one of the primary ways through which people gather information about other social groups. Within this context, the import of mass media on the social shaping of culture within a society further facilitates indirect means of tinkering with reality. This, as Scheler argued, is characteristic of the thought process of ressenting individuals.

Moreover, the increased accessibility, and quantity of information and communication, also leads to the globalization of local political and cultural issues. Mass media "serves as the main channel of communication between the polity and politicians" (Mersden & Savigny, 2009, p.4) and by fostering the globalization of issues it not only catapults a localized event beyond its borders but also leads to an increased scrutiny of the social and political actors. Generating a sense of vulnerability around a politicians' public perception and political success, mass media beckons further participation on the part of these politicians. This leads to a situation where such a notion of vulnerability becomes self-propagating as further participation within mass media leads not only to further exposure towards the lives and actions of politicians but also subsequently to an increase in the scrutiny itself – the two factors that had instantiated the vulnerability in the first place. Mass media thus not only facilitates this vulnerability but also nurtures this facilitation. With this I conclude this section, and the next subsection analyzes the implications of the amplified outreach provided by ICTs.

Outreach Amplification and Increased Mobilization

In this section the focus is on the amplification of outreach facilitated by the internet. By 'amplification of outreach' I refer not only to the fact that the online content can be accessed anywhere in the world by the online citizenry but also to the fact that through internet tools, such as forums and blogs, people can reach out and connect to particular interest groups and individuals. With regard to the former, the traditional communication technologies, such as newspapers and television, also enable far-reaching large scale consumption of information. In the previous section I have already shown that the online community is exposed to a large number of information sources. In a similar stead, this amplification of outreach functions parallel to the decentralized aspect of the internet, providing people exposure to a number of communication sources. However, in this section my focus is exclusively on the amplification of outreach with regard to the possible mobilization of interest groups and individuals. This technology-enabled amplified outreach has implications for the sociology of ressentiment, especially for the discourse of social outreach. Through these technologies not only can ressenting individuals reach out and connect to like-minded people but also political parties, especially populistic anti-immigration parties such as PVV, can employ them to mobilize the targeted electorate.

Increased Participation and Affordable Outreach

The internet "makes possible widespread cultural participation and interaction that previously could not have existed on the same scale" (Balkin, 2004, p.2). In addition to the facilitation of information generation, the broadcasting nature of the internet fosters online spectatorship, marking an increased exposure and access to information. The formation and shaping of public opinion depends largely on the ways in which meaning-making occurs within a society and increasingly "people [now] have [more

of] a say in the development of [...societal] ideas and meaning because they are able to participate in their creation, growth, and spread" (p.4).

Moreover, these technologies facilitate to a certain extent the "development of vast communication networks that connect every part of the world for the purpose of distributing digital content" (p.6). Offering "opportunities for creating a […] system of free expression" (p.3), the internet with new forms of border-circumventing communication furnishes a space for discussion of cultural and political issues. It provides its users with cheap and easy access to large-scale information infrastructures, making "it easier for content to cross cultural and geographic boundaries" (p.7). With regard to group communication, the affordable and decentralized internet communication technologies, such as blogs, social networking sites, forums, and other web sites, enable "new groups to be easily formed and for new members to join existing groups" (Weare, 2002, p.670). "The low costs and advanced capabilities allow [even] smaller groups to maintain membership interest and facilitate collaboration" (Ibid.). In the next two subsections, using the empirics from the Dutch case study, I will highlight the implications of the affordable and far-reaching outreach provided by the internet technologies for the sociology of ressentiment.

Online Platforms

Within the analysis of the Dutch case study, one of the first signs of the relationship between the amplified outreach provided by the internet and increased public mobilization was clearly visible through the use of condolence web registers after the assassination of Fortuyn (Margary, 2007). The web registers "served as vehicles for disclosing political criticism, resentment, and hatred" (p.120) and became "active arenas of resentment" (p.121). Through these registers a large number of people not only mourned the death of Fortuyn but also criticized the politicians and governments regarding immigration and integration issues. Moreover, a similar, but less pronounced, public mobilization was also visible after the death of van Gogh (Pritchard & Clement, 2004; Rovers, 2004; de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005). These sites often become a way not only for disseminating and consuming information about particular subjects but also for conjuring and mobilizing like-minded people (Chadwick & Howard, 2009).

With regard to movies such as *Submission* and *Fitna*, I have already shown that the visual culture of internet "is clearly capable of overcoming the communicative barriers between countries and of giving voices to a plurality of cosmopolitanisms that far exceeds the diversity of voices typically found in traditional, nationally circumscribed media" (Zoonen et al., 2011, p.19) A research study of the responses to *Fitna* on YouTube showed that most of the video responses actually "came from societal and religious organisation[s]" (Zoonen, Vis, & Mihelj, 2010, p.258). Unlike the traditional forms of media, such as television and radio, internet applications "such as YouTube allow individuals to engage in more affordable transnational communicative practices themselves by means of producing self-made, publicly available textual or visual representations" (Zoonen, Vis, & Mihelj, 2011, p.619). Such technologies "give voice to and sustain communication between, multiple […social groups], engendered from a variety of political, cultural and social standpoints" (Ibid.).

Furthermore, in her research on the dynamics of the public debate on immigration on online Dutch forums, Witschge (2007) highlights the fact that a portion of the Dutch online populace is also

involved in discussing the political aspects of the immigration issue within online forums.[77] Witschge analyzed and surveyed the content of seven major Dutch forums, namely *Fok, Maghrebonline, Maroc, Nieuwrechts, Politiekdebat, Terdiscussie,* and *Weerwoord*. Through her research, Witschge not only highlighted the fact that a large percentage of respondents gathered information pertaining to immigrants and Dutch politics through the internet, news media, and television but also that a significant percentage of her respondents showed dissatisfaction with the immigrants and argued that these immigrants should adapt to the Dutch culture and to the Dutch way of life. Although a detailed analysis of her research is not possible for substantiating the argument in this subsection, what is indeed interesting is that social platforms, such as "political and issue-based blog sites and discussion fora [in addition to sites like YouTube] have enabled [far-reaching] political communities and debates and potentially radical interventions in mainstream party politics" (Blaagard, 2010, p.5).

Political Mobilization

With regard to the advent of communication technologies, Dutch youth are amongst the world's most active online users and a research showed that "99 percent of Dutch youth use the internet on average more than 10 hours per week" (STIR, 2009, as cited in Zoonen, Ridder, & Hirzalla, 2010, p.5). Although the figures are relatively high, it has been shown that the youth in western democracies mostly use the internet for accessing social networking sites and entertainment content rather than for political participation (see CivicWeb, 2007; Livingstone & Bober, 2005). Moreover, these youth have significantly less knowledge and interest in electoral politics than do older people (Delli Carpini, 2000) and thus, it is of little surprise that VAAs are highly popular amongst western democratic youth (see Schwarz & Fivaz, 2007; Walgrave, Aelst, & Nuytemans, 2008). This is evident in a study done by Zoonen, Ridder, et al. (2010) in which they show that the "younger people [in Netherlands indeed] use VAAs more than older people" (p.10), especially during election time (Aalbert, 2006, as cited in Zoonen, Ridder, et al., 2010, p.12). In the last chapter, I had showcased how the use of VAAs helps political parties, especially populistic parties such as PVV, to mobilize the ressentiment amongst the electorate. These technologies, by providing a match or a compass, facilitate the association of people with like-minded political parties.

Within this technologically amplified outreach, the increased mobility rendered possible by the internet clearly has an influence on the sociology of ressentiment, particularly to the discourse of social outreach. The social tools on the internet, along with their fast and large many-to-many communicative abilities have facilitated the mobilization of like-minded individuals and it can be inferred that it is now easier for ressenting individuals to reach out and connect to each other. Moreover, this facilitation can also be employed by political parties to mobilize the ressentiment within the electorate through, amongst other things, the use of VAAs. With this I conclude this section, the next section deals with the correlative feature of mass media and its implications for the sociology of ressentiment.

Framing and Searching: The Colligation of Information

The focus in this section is on *correlative feature* of mass media that has significant implications for its ability to facilitate and influence the process of meaning-making within a society. By the term *correlative feature*, I refer to mass media's ability to instantiate relationships between different pieces of information. In this section I will explain and highlight this feature by showcasing two particular variants of it: the

[77] I wish to thank Prof. Dr. Sally Wyatt, professor of digital cultures and development at Maastricht University, for bringing this research to my attention.

process of framing within news media and the advent of keyword-enabled searching on the internet. I will argue that these processes lead to the development of an intuitive sense of relationship between different pieces of information, thereby fostering the colligation of bits and bytes into one unique narrative. By the term 'colligation', I refer to the process of correlating fragmented and isolated pieces of information under a general concept or hypothesis.[78] I will conclude this section by showcasing the implications of mass media's facilitation of colligation for the sociology of ressentiment.

Colligating through framing

Within media studies, an important construct with regard to the influence of media on public opinion is the concept of 'framing'. Entman (1993) defines framing as the process of selecting "aspects of a perceived reality and […making] them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (p.52). Through the use of framing, "mass media are in a powerful position to synthesize seemingly fragmented and unconnected situations and create what appear to be widespread phenomena […They] strive to convert stories about particular cases into examples of a general situation" (Kielbowics & Scherer, 1986, p.81). These particular cases are usually understood as, what Zillmann & Brosius (2000) call, *exemplars* – events that exemplify a large collection of events with perceived common characteristics. For example, 9-11 can be understood as an exemplar within the large collection of terrorist acts that are attributed to Islamic fundamentalists.

Within Netherlands "anti-religious and anti-migration policies have been high on the agenda for more than a decade and have enjoyed a high media profile" (Blaagard, 2010, p.2). In the last chapter I highlighted the strong correlation between external events on one hand and media and parliament's focus on issues on the other (Vliegenthart & Roggeband, 2007). With regard to the portrayal of Islam in the news media, the analysis in the last chapter clearly showcased the disposition of Dutch as well as international news media to problematize immigrants and Islam especially around particular local and global events.[79] The attacks of September 11, 2001, casted Islam in a largely negative light owing to the news media's portrayal of Islam not only as a violent ideology but also as an internal as well as external threat especially within Europe and America (see Cesari, 2005; Kalin, 2004).

Whereas the Rushdie affair exposed the Dutch to the difference in the sensibilities of the two cultures, 9-11 colored the Dutch public debate with the 'war on terror', marking a 115 percent rise in issue attention towards Islam, immigration, and integration within the news media (Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007). Moreover, post 9-11 not only was Islam more strongly associated with terrorism in the Dutch media but also there was a significant increase in the Islam-as-threat frame (Roggeband & Vliegenthart, 2007; Ruigrok & van Atteveldt, 2007). Significant events not only instantly beckon substantial attention within the news media but also have a long term influence over media content (see

[78] Defining what pieces of information are 'fragmented and isolated' is a difficult endeavour. However, within the context of this chapter, with the terms *fragmented* or *isolated*, I only imply that apart from a general abstract correlation, the fragmented bits are not directly linked to each other. For example, within my understanding a news article on 9-11 and a news article on van Gogh's murder are fragmented bits of information with no clear link in geography and time apart from the fact that Muslims were mentioned in both of these. Thus, for me certain bits of pieces of information are fragmented and isolated because each of them is highly contextual qualitatively.

[79] Cultural relativists and scholars may argue that this is perhaps a case of bad journalism or bias and that there are other accounts in which Islam is cast in a more nuanced and neutral light, if not a completely positive one. I understand the validity of the criticism; however, the fact remains that not only does anti-Islamic rhetoric exist within news media but also there is no clear cut way of analyzing and demarcating bad journalism or media bias, especially by the citizens.

Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007a). Ethnic reporting in Dutch news and mass media has thus over time "remained focus on a small selection of preferred topics, including immigration, crime, violence, cultural differences, and race relations" (van Dijk, 1995, p.19).

The analysis in this thesis has also shown that within Netherlands, there was an increased stress in the news media on the problematization of Dutch Muslim immigrants. There was an increased focus on the "unprecedented political violence in the Netherlands, new terrorist attacks by Muslim extremists elsewhere in Europe (Madrid, 2003; London, 2005), and the many public statements by popular figures such as Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali [, and Wilders,]" (Snel & Stock, 2008, p.118). The increased reporting of such events "contributed to a climate in which the contrasts between native Dutch citizens and new Muslim immigrants and their respective cultures were more and more emphasized" (Ibid.). The sharp peak in Dutch media coverage of the issues of immigration, integration, and Islam after the death of van Gogh further qualifies the framing nature of news media. Furthermore, a survey done by Wal, d' Haenens, & Koeman (2005) on the content of nine Dutch newspapers highlighted the fact that the portrayal of immigrants, especially Muslim ones, in a negative light was largely facilitated by "the frequent association of minorities with particularly negative news contexts, such as religious fundamentalism and illegal immigration, and, in particular, the over-representation of minorities in crime news" (p.948). Moreover, such associations are not only drawn within news media but may also be instantiated within the online realm through the advent of keyword-enabled searching.

Colligating through searching

Contemporary sociotechnical societies are 'search societies' (Halavais, 2009). With the information explosion on the internet, searching has become one of the most indispensable tools for almost every internet user. Apart from a usual list of websites that an individual frequents on the internet, most of the information that he encounters online is through searching (Ibid.). Whether one is looking for an image, a news article, a movie, a music file, a research paper, or any other kind of online content – it is the small little textbox of a search provider that most of the people turn to. Searching thus becomes a way for an individual to traverse and navigate through the plethora of online information to find what he is looking for. However, to find exactly what you are looking for is not that easy and searching more often than not is unproductive and time consuming (see Wouters, Hellsten, & Leydesdorff, 2004). Even with advanced search engines such as Google and Bing, a search usually return millions of entries. For example, table 5 showcases the results from a Google search on the exact full phrase: 'the religion of Islam'. Clearly, searching through approximately 7.4 million entries is not feasible for an average individual.

Search Phrase	*Media Type*	*Number of hits (approx.)*
"the religion of Islam"	Web-pages	7,390,000
	Videos	4,240,000
	News Items	105
	Blogs	461,000
	Books	516,000
	Discussions	1,100,000

Table 5: The enormous Google search on *'the religion of Islam'* (Source: google.com)[80]

[80] The search was done on June 30, 2012.

However, my focus in this subsection is not on the difficulties of online search, but rather on the implications of such a difficulty. Within such a situation, what becomes very important is the search term itself – the *keywords*. People make sense of the world around them through language. The online realm is no different. Linguistic keywords, or search terms, are quintessentially important for the process of searching through digital content to find what one is looking for (Halavais, 2009; Wise et al., 2006). For example, table 6 clearly shows how the use of particular combination of keywords can help sort through a large number of entries to find a particular piece of information. Specific keywords, or a combination thereof, can drastically reduce the noise in search results to provide particular information to the user.

Search Phrase	*Media Type*	*Number of hits (approx.)*
"the religion of Islam" + "Immigration debate" + "Geert Wilders"	Web-pages	773
	Blogs	8
	Discussions	2

Table 6: The feasibility of search terms or keywords (Source: Google.com)[81]

However, this focus on keywords leads to labeling and categorization. Increasingly websites are created around site maps that are prominently displayed in the website's header. Categories, subcategories, and the ability to search for keywords on these websites leads to the classification of information based on linguistic parameters (Halavais, 2009). For example, every major news website has a well-defined category for European news, and some even have a sub-category called *Dutch Politics*.[82] Clicking on any of these categories, leads the user to a page where pieces of information that have been correlated with that particular category are fetched and displayed on a single page. Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML), the core platform through which most of the web pages are developed, provides the ability to delineate metatags for each page. Metatags are tags that "convey information about the page, [...in terms of] a summary, relevant keywords, [and] information about authorship" (p.197). Search engines further use these metatags to classify and retrieve information based on their correlation to the user's search terms or keywords.

Although a detailed analysis of the use of keywords on the internet or the processes by which search engines classify information is beyond the scope and relevance of this thesis, I argue that the focus on keywords has an important implication for the contemporary sociology of information. Almost all major newspapers have an online presence.

Whereas on one hand, the physical newspaper is a combination of limited pieces of information, the online editions are more like converging archives that store far larger amount of news and a host of other content such as videos, image sets, twitter feeds, and blog links. In line with the analysis of framing in the previous subsection, research shows that the process of framing can also be discerned within the online editions of Dutch newspapers (see Kessel, 2010; Marsden & Savigny, 2009; Roggeband & Vliegenthart, 2007; Ruigrok & van Atteveldt, 2007; Wal et al., 2005; van Praag & Adriaansen, 2011). I argue that this process of framing is further accentuated within online sites owing to the advent of categorization and the ability to search for keywords. These keywords act as markers towards particular frames and provide search results from a large archive characterized by a convergence of varying forms of information.

[81] The search was done on June 30, 2012. The rest of the categories (videos, news, and books) returned zero results each.
[82] See, for example, www.economist.com

Using a particular example, I will now showcase how the process of keyword-enabled searching 'may' foster the public perception of colligation between different bits and pieces of information on news websites. It is indeed difficult to articulate an understanding of how the public perceives information online. In recent times, a vast amount of scholarship has increasingly been dedicated to analyzing the correlations between the manner in which mass media classifies or represents information and the way people tend to perceive reality.[83] It is within this correlation that my argument lies. Owing to the lack of detailed empirical evidence to clearly explicate a conclusion with regard to colligation online, I will only broadly sketch out a working hypothesis that requires further research for it to be substantiated.

Table 7 lists out a few results from the first page of a search I did on the term 'the religion of Islam' on three major news sites: The New York Times, The Guardian, and The Washington Post. Clearly, one can see a similarity not only within the results of each site but also across them. Threat, terror, and integration seem to be prominently correlated to the religion of Islam. This is no surprise because post 9-11, mass media has witnessed a sharp rise in the coverage on Islam and events that people find 'related' are usually clubbed together on the online realm (Altheide, 2009; Ettinger & Udris, 2009). How and why these events are related is left for the journalist or the website's content manager to decide. The search results are also in line with a host of other researches that showcase a strong correlation between the negative conceptualization of Islam within society and its negative portrayal online, especially within news media (see Altheide, 2009; Anderson, 2003; Bødker, 2009; Cesari, 2005; Ettinger & Udris, 2009; Sunier, 2005; Varisco, 2010).

The New York Times	*The Guardian*	*The Washington Post*
This is a Religious War	Mali braced for military intervention amid fears it could become 'next Somalia'	37 killed in raids on Christian villages in deeply divided central Nigeria region, reprisals
A Nation Challenged: The Religious Right; Islam is Violent in Nature, Pat Robertson Says	Two terror alerts as Olympics security goes into overdrive	For Egypt's new Islamist government, jobs are first priority
Islam Is More Ideology Than Religion, F.B.I. Analyst Says in Video	Muslims are well-integrated in Britain – but no one seems to believe it	Libyans vote in 1st nationwide election in decades but violence underscores challenges ahead
Turkey Separates Religion From the State; Deputies to Swear 'On Honor,' Not 'Before God'	EDL and Sikh men unite in using women as pawns	Police: Thousands of Pakistanis kill man, burn corpse after accusing him of desecrating Quran
Religion; Islam Tensions Over Reforms	Muslim moderates 'face hate campaign'	If there's no women on Saudi Olympic plane, the IOC should send it right back home

Table 7: Searching and the colligation of fragmented information[84]

However, most of the research within this context has been focused on analyzing particular sources of information such as news media sites, blogs, or social forums, and there is relatively far less literature on

[83] Refer to (in an alphabetical order): Altheide (2009); Anker (2005); Balkin (2004); Blaagard (2010); Chadwick (2006); Coleman (2011); Ettinger & Udris (2009); Hoover & Clark (2002); Kaplan & Haenlein (2010); Lister et al. (2003); Luhmann (2000); Maarten & Versteeg (2009); Marsden & Savigny (2009); Sclove (1995); Stewart et al. (2003); Vasterman (2005); Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden (2007b); Vreese (2007); Weare (2002); van Dijk (1995); van der Pas et al. (2011)

[84] Source: The New York Times (nytimes.com), The Guardian (guardian.co.uk), and The Washington Post (washingtonpost.com). This search was done on June 30, 2012.

the particular role and significance of 'search engines' for the construction and shaping of public opinion (Balkin, 2004; Barabási, 2003; Halavais, 2009). Although I have only showcased the results from three major sites, it is usually of no surprise that when searching for anything related to Islam an individual usually discovers "a polemical 'anti-Islam' website near the top of the listings of results" (Bunt, 2000a) or other bits and pieces of information that conform to the stereotypical conceptualization of Islam as a threat.

This is also true of multimedia content. For example, table 8 lists out few results from the first page of a search I did on YouTube with a term as general as 'Islam'. Clearly, a similar pattern is visible. Different bits and bytes of information that showcase the problematic nature of Islam come together on one page, presented to the user 'sorted by relevance'. What exactly is meant by relevance and how it is determined by either technological code or social actors are important sociological questions that can provide a nuanced understanding not only of the sociotechnical dynamics of the formation and shaping of public opinion but also of the sociology of information in general. Clearly one can see a pattern within the search results related to Islam either on news media sites or multimedia ones. This convergence of fragmented pieces of information through search engines may foster the colligation of content and may significantly shape and influence the public opinion on Islam. Further research needs to be done to corroborate this claim; however, the initial search results that I have showcased definitely provide a basis for my working hypothesis.

Islam on YouTube		
State Funded Religious Schools are Ok (If They're Not Islamic)	Islam: The Misunderstood Religion	'Islam rising, West diminishing, Libya big terror training camp'
The Failure of Political Islam	War on Islam? FBI Spies on US Muslims living in fear	'Hiroshima' Tactics for 'Total War' on Islam
Why I love Jesus But Reject Islam	"Obsession: Radical Islam's War Against The West"	Turkey Run by 'Islamic Terrorists'

Table 8: Correlating Islam on YouTube (Source: youtube.com)[85]

With this I conclude this section. Framing in the news media, coupled with the possibility that the use of keywords on the internet further fosters colligation, have clear implications for the sociology of ressentiment. Framing tends to generalize particular events under a unified umbrella of a particular issue or problem definition. Within the Dutch news media, both in print and online, such a process was clearly evident where a lot of information was clubbed together with regard to the issue of Muslim immigrants and Islam. Of course an individual can argue that these events were actually interrelated; however, what is then left to discern is whether the individual has already colligated these events into a coherent narrative and whether such a colligation is indeed facilitated because of framing itself. Moreover, through a working hypothesis I have showcased that a similar argument holds for the facilitation of colligation through keyword-enabled searching online.

With regard to ressentiment, both of these processes may in fact facilitate the perception of a felt injury by promoting a particular issue or problem frame. I have already showcased in this thesis the researches that corroborate my claim that the process of framing within the Dutch news media has actually played a significant role within the public debate on immigration and the problematization of

[85] This search was done on June 30, 2012.

Islam. Both of these processes foster colligation of information and such colligation may not only problematize an individual's perception of reality (a fact that was clearly visible in the Netherlands) but also constantly nurture this problematization by facilitating and fostering the process of colligation on part of the individual.

Symbolic Acts: The Peculiar case of User-generated Content

The last three sections showcased the salient features of ICTs that influence the contemporary sociology of information and communication. The focus in this section is different. Herein, I will sketch out a particular aspect of user-generated content on the internet – especially the content of blogs and social forums – that relates to Scheler's sociology of ressentiment. Since the time internet has come about as a public medium, it "has attracted grass roots activism, bottom-up discussions and religious reflection" [86] (Zoonen et al., 2010, p.251). In fact, research has shown that religion is one of the most important reasons that people go online: to share their own experiences, to know the spiritual experiences of other people, and to engage in communal activities (Barna Research Group, 2001; Bunt, 2009). Moreover, a significant portion of the material uploaded on the famous video streaming site YouTube comprises of religious content, particularly related to Christianity and Islam (Paolillo, 2008). Thus, it was no surprise the *Submission* and *Fitna* thrived on the internet eliciting a large number of responses from internet users.

Particularly with regard to social blogs, Keren (2006) claims that blogging, as a user activity, can best be explained as an individual's resentment towards "social control and manipulation by powerful political, corporate and media forces" (p.149) in trying to "restore a degree of authenticity, [and] expressing some inner truth" (Ibid.). Indeed, blogs, more often than not, tend to be user attempts at unsuccessfully altering established societal structures in accordance with their own desires and needs (Lovink, 2008). Thus, it is of little surprise that although there are a few blogs that provide original content, "most of the blogosphere is devoted to commentary" (Balkin, 2004, p.10).

A similar strand of technology is represented by online discussion forums. These forums constitute an "online public discussion area where users exchange ideas and information" (Mann & Stewart, 1999, p.219). Whereas the blog primarily functions as a publishing medium, a discussion forum facilitates interaction by providing mechanisms to converse online. Indeed, much research has clubbed these two technologies – blogs and forums – together by drawing similarities not only between the content on both these technologies but also between their features and societal relevance (see Bers, 2011; Lister, Dovey, Giddings, Grant, & Kelly, 2003; Mann & Stewart, 1999).

Largely facilitated by ICTs, this notion of participatory culture based around user-generated content tends "to accentuate the emancipation of the engaged citizen, who unleashes […his] need for self-expression […] onto the digital spaces created expressly for this purpose" (van Dijck, 2009, p.54). However, "we still know very little about the effect[s] of user-generated content on the new media landscape [and on the society at large]" (p.55). How is the content received by the public? How is it understood? Does it instantiate a change within the spectator or within society at large? Does it lead to a psychological gratification for the user? Such questions, as of today, are very difficult to answer because people use these technologies for a wide range of reasons.

[86] For an overview of the role and significance of the internet in politics refer to Chadwick & Howard (2009).

People mostly interact with user-generated content not only for fulfilling information and mood management needs but also for enhancing social connections and online collectivities (Shao, 2009). The increasing uptake of the concept of 'followers' either on Facebook, Twitter, blogs, forums, or other social networking and information sites is a case in point for the significance of a user's need to reach out and connect to like-minded people. In the practice of such ICTs, "the potentialities of technology, a set of cultural patterns, rhetorical conventions available in […society], and the history of the subject have combined to produce a recurrent rhetorical motive that has found a conventional mode of expression" (C. R. Miller & Shepherd, 2004). These technologies provide decentralized spaces for the people to symbolically express, amongst other things, their resentment and dissatisfaction through social commentary, and indeed also to reach out and connect to a larger audience.

However, I argue that by facilitating alternative spaces to vent out steam and put forth one's own opinion on societal matters, these technologies also facilitate the sustenance of ressentiment. Although there is a lack of evidence with regard to the contents and effects of blogging on the Dutch public debate on immigration, there is indeed evidence that clearly shows that the Dutch public debate is being contested online on discussion forums by a large number of people (Witschge, 2007). Although a detailed analysis of the content of these forums is beyond the scope of this argument, I would like to point out its implication for ressentiment by drawing two general inferences. Owing to the lack of detailed empirical evidence, these claims should be understood more as hypotheses rather than as conclusions.

First, debates on social forums, blogs, chat rooms, and networking websites along with the ability to comment on online content has made it possible for ressenting individuals to indulge in, what Scheler calls, acts of contempt and 'ressenting actions'. I had explained in chapter two that ressentiment is not devoid of all actions, but only of practical actions that affect a change. Acts of contempt are integral to ressentiment, in which the ressenting individual lashes out his passive aggression towards particular subjects. However, it is clear from the Dutch case study that these actions do not necessarily lead to a significant practical change in the ressenting individual's and social group's situation. The Dutch society, irrespective of the ressenting social collectivity's actions online, has still remained more or less the same. Policies have not changed drastically, immigrants are still coming in, Islam is still seen as a looming threat, and the socioeconomic landscape is not conducive as well. Within this context, online ressenting individuals, who partake in discussions, blogging, commenting, or networking with regard to the threat of Islam, may be unable to perceive an affected change within their repressed state. Although it can be argued that these actions may in fact aid the diffusion of ressentiment to a certain extent by helping to vent out anger in other forms, it is clear from the analysis in this thesis that they cannot eradicate it. Moreover, they may in turn make the ressentiment more severe by not only making the individual feel powerless and impotent in the wake of the unchanging situation *(even with the execution of 'actions' on blogs and forums)* but also facilitate interaction with the dominant value hierarchy (*non-ressenting users on blogs and forums*) thereby further fostering ressentiment.

Second, on the contrary blogs and forums also provide an opportunity for ressenting individuals to meet like-minded people. Scheler had clearly stated that ressenting individuals have two particular characteristics: a) the constant urge to reach out for opinions to provide a subjective basis for their beliefs, and b) a tendency to discern one's opinions through indirect tinkering with reality. These technologies make salient both of these features. In the section *Outreach Amplification and Increased Mobilization*, I showcased how ICTs enable greater mobilization amongst ressenting individuals.

However, with greater mobilization online, blogs and forums also provide the ressenting individuals with the opportunity to indirectly tinker with reality through discussions with people. These technologies gratify the ressenting individual's need to reach out for subjectivity while at the same time providing an affordable and easy way to indirectly tinker with reality. Such salience, I argue, can indeed foster ressentiment amongst such individuals. Although further empirical evidence is needed to examine whether user-generated content on blogs and forums sustains ressentiment, the current situation characterized by an inability of the ressenting individuals to affect a change coupled with the advent of blogs and forums is indeed conducive to Schelerean acts of contempt.

Ressentiment, Technology, and Colligation: A Final Note

In today's world, ICTs provide a freedom of expression 'accelerated' by the speed of optic fibers and 'amplified' by the outreach of the online hyperlinks. The analysis in this chapter has demonstrated three prominent implications of ICTs for the social shaping of public opinion and subsequently for the sociology of ressentiment through the empirics of the Dutch case study. First, the decentralized nature of these technologies culminates into an inflation of information, leading to the multiplication of available sources that can disseminate particular motivations for ressentiment. Moreover, such an expansion of sources may also facilitate the reinforcing of ressentiment through an increased exposure to information that reiterates either the dominant value system or the powerlessness and impotency of the ressenting individuals. Second, the technological amplification of outreach leads to the facilitation of ways in which ressentiment can be mobilized. This facilitation is characteristic not only of the ease with which ressenting individuals can now connect and associate with like-minded people but also of the fact that political parties can utilize this to mobilize the ressentiment within the electorate. Finally, the notion of framing in the news media leads to a synthesis of fragmented events into a generalized narrative that can influence public opinion by promoting a perceived causality with regard to a social issue. Moreover, akin to the process of framing, in my working hypothesis I had argued that the increasing usage of keywords on the internet can also encourage people to colligate fragmented pieces of information by drawing correlations between them. Following up on this working hypothesis, I will now conclude this chapter by providing an empirical evidence of a proof of concept that showcases how contextual bits and pieces of information can actually be clubbed together, at least in practice, to portray the perception of a coherent narrative.

A case of colligation in practice: mashed-up Fitna

The digital revolution has fostered the "creation and widespread availability of technologies that make it easy to copy, modify, annotate, collate, transmit, and distribute content by storing it in [a] digital form" (Balkin, 2004, p.6). These technologies have reduced the "costs of innovating with existing information, commenting on it, and building upon it" (p.7) and people are now "not simply empowered to copy digital content; they are also empowered to alter it, annotate it, combine it, and mix it with other content and produce something new" (p.8). "Internet speech, like all speech, appropriates and transforms" (p.31). This is indeed true because a significant source of online creativity is the ability to build on to existing information (Sonvilla-Weiss, 2010). The use of particular cultural icons and popular bits of information to create and innovate is "a standard technique of speech in the digital world" (Balkin, 2004, p.11) and this speech "continually develops [further] through linkage, collage, annotation, [and] mixture" (p.31). However, I will on a particular category of products that are produced through these processes: *video mash-ups*.

A video mash-up can be understood as a piece of multimedia content that is created by combining already existing information (text, audio, and video) in a way so as to create a derivate work that correlates the fragmented contents into a coherent narrative. One such example of a video mash-up is Wilders' anti-Islamic movie *Fitna*. The movie is an exemplar of the process of 'cut-copy-paste' where bits and pieces of information taken from a large number of sources are clubbed together to imply that Islam is a threat to western liberal society. Starting with the Danish cartoon of Mohammed with a bomb in his turban, *Fitna* is interspersed with excerpts from the Qur'an. In between the excerpts, the film contains footage from 9-11, speeches and interviews of Islamic fundamentalists, footage around the time of van Gogh's murder, scans of newspaper clippings, and video content showcasing Muslim life (Wilders, 2008b). The film creates a narrative that signifies a colligation, a correlation between dispersed events in space and time through the merger of a vast amount of fragmented content. Mash-ups, thus, are essentially an exercise in colligation. Moreover, *Fitna* is not a unique case and a quick search on any major video platform would lead you to a host of video mash-ups that portray a similar colligation – 'Islam is evil'.

In my working hypothesis I had primarily focused on information on the internet that *might* foster colligation on behalf of the individual who is exposed to it. I had argued that owing to the significance of keywords in classifying information online, the individual might be exposed to fragmented pieces of information through which he may perceive a colligation, a narrative that conceives of Islam as a threat. *Fitna* is one such colligation – a clear exemplar of how fragmented pieces of information can indeed be de-contextualized in practice to produce a particular narrative around a problem definition or a hypothesis. Through the combination of text, audio, and video, *Fitna* lends insight into the process of colligation and showcases that bits and pieces of information that already exist on the internet and news media can actually be clubbed together in one coherent storyline to portray Islam as a threat. This perception of colligation was evident in the news coverage, discussions, and user responses post *Fitna* – in all of these the film was clearly understood as an anti-Islamic narrative showcasing the story of the perceived threat from Islam (Zoonen, Vis, et al., 2010; Zoonen et al., 2011). The existence of video mash-ups, which are essentially an exercise in the practice of colligation, thus provides further empirical evidence for my working hypothesis that correlations between bits and pieces of fragmented information online can *indeed* be represented and perceived as one unique coherent narrative.

6

Conclusion:
Of Turns, Mass Media, and Social Structures

"Storytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it."
(Arendt, 1970, p.105)

This final chapter of the thesis presents a set of inferences that can be deduced from the empirical research of the Dutch case study that has been presented in this thesis. Through the analysis of the Dutch sociopolitical and cultural landscape, this thesis has put forth the story of the Dutch debate on immigration and of the social shaping of the public opinion towards Islam. In line with Hannah Arendt's abovementioned quote, this exercise in storytelling has showcased a few important points not only with regard to the Dutch public debate but also regarding the sociology of ressentiment in contemporary societies. Employing a set of theoretical heuristics based on Scheler's work on ressentiment, this thesis has analyzed the social shaping of the Dutch public opinion towards Islam not only with regard to the historicity of events within Netherlands but also with respect to the multiplicity of issues that characterize the public debate. The research in this thesis has shown that indeed over time the Dutch sociopolitical and cultural landscape has come to be colored with the symptomatic emergence of ressentiment towards Islam. Moreover, this thesis has also showcased the import of ICTs not only for the social shaping of Dutch public opinion but also for the sociology of ressentiment with regard to sociotechnical societies. This chapter is, then, a retrospective narrative that delineates a set of three conclusions based on the story told this thesis:

a) The shifts in the discourse of the Dutch public debate over time,
b) the relationship between mass media, collective memory, and liminality, and
c) the understanding of ressentiment as a social structure within Dutch society.

Turns within the Dutch public debate on Immigration

What has evidently become clear with the analysis in this thesis is that the Dutch public debate on immigration is not a straightforward narrative. Over time the debate has witnessed a large number of events that took place within the Dutch sociopolitical and cultural landscape, and each of these events has had an influence on the social shaping of the debate. The debate, starting as early as the eighties, still continues to be a major issue within Dutch society and it is within the historicity of the debate that we can discern significant shifts in the context of the debate's discourse over time. The aim of this section, thus, is to explicate an understanding of these shifts in context to the discourse of the debate through the articulation of particular turns that took place within the Dutch public debate on immigration.

'Turns' is a tricky term to use. At face value, it implies the connotation of a complete change or alteration with regard to an object or subject's orientation. However, in this section, I use the term in a more nuanced way. Turns, in this section within the context of the Dutch public debate on immigration, refer to pronounced themes or issues that appeared prominently within the discourse of

the debate at different points in time. Instead of carrying the connotation of complete shifts in context, terms in this section should be understood as signifying particular strains or themes that were significantly discernable within the historicity of the public debate. These turns and themes, mentioned in the next subsections, not only lend an insight into the nature and trajectory of the debate but also showcase the multiplicity and complexity of issues that are embedded within it. The next subsections will explicate an understanding of five turns within the Dutch public debate on immigration and showcase the themes that were prominent within each of them.[87] The understanding of these turns has been extrapolated from the analysis in this thesis, particularly the analysis presented in Chapter 4 – *Ressenting Islam: The Wilderness of Netherlands* – and I have footnoted the relevant subsections that are related to each turn.

Temporal nature of Immigrants [88]

As I have shown earlier, political assertions within post-war Netherlands were clearly inclined towards the idea the Netherlands should not be an immigration country. The incoming migrants from Indonesia, Morocco, Turkey, and Southern Europe were only seen as temporary workers that were there to help rebuild the country. It was believed that once the work was finished, these immigrants would then leave the Dutch borders. Moreover, even the issues concerning immigrants and immigration were depoliticized to a large extent until the nineties. Such issues were primarily dealt through technocratic compromise and consensus amongst the ruling elite in line with the polder model of governance. Thus, owing to the impression that the immigrants were only of a 'temporal nature', immigration in the Netherlands was minimally regulated up until the mid-1970s. It was only in the early eighties that it became clear that the immigrants had indeed become a permanent feature of Dutch society. Immigration then prominently came on the national agenda, and various restrictive immigrant policies were set up during that time.

Statistical turn: the demographics of immigrants [89]

The early nineties marked a 'statistical turn' within the discourse of the public debate on immigration within Netherlands. A clear exemplar of this, as I have discussed earlier, is the seminal 1990 WRR report – titled *Immigrant Policy* – that expounded on the demographics of immigration and showcased the social and economic problems faced by the immigrants as well as by the country (WRR, 1990). The focus in this report was largely on statistical factors such as the 60 percent growth in the number of immigrants or the 40 percent unemployment within the immigrant working population. Moreover, the report also clearly stated that it was not simply the case that immigrants had become an intrinsic part of Dutch society, but rather the process of immigration itself should now be seen as a permanent feature within Netherlands even with the restrictive immigration policies in place.

Furthermore, along these lines the problems related to immigrants were then seen largely as an internal socioeconomic issue rather than as an external threat and owing to such an ideology, the socioeconomics of immigration were then handled through the welfare state model of governance. There were a large number of immigrants and an equally large percentage of unemployment amongst them that generated problems of social welfare and economic growth within the country. The WRR

[87] With regard to the first two turns – the term 'immigrants' is used in reference to all Dutch immigrants in general, while in the last three turns – the term is used particularly with regard to Muslim immigrants only.
[88] See: Chapter 4 subsection - *WRR's Immigrant Policy document of 1990: 'demographics and socioeconomics'.*
[89] See: Chapter 4 subsection - *WRR's Immigrant Policy document of 1990: 'demographics and socioeconomics'.*

report, thus, outlined a new immigration policy within Netherlands based on the demographic and socioeconomic statistics of immigrants, and the logistics of the welfare state. Such a sustained focus on the statistics and demographics of immigrants, as I have already shown, has come to characterize majority of the Dutch government and ministry reports including those of WRR, MoECS, MoEAAI, MoFA, and MoHWS.

9-11 turn: the threat of Muslim immigrants [90]

At the beginning of the twenty first century, 9-11 marked a prominent turn within the discourse of the public debate, and the perceived terror threat from Islam took prominence. As I have shown earlier, post 9-11 Islam was perceived worldwide as a violent and militant threat. These events were not only featured prominently within the Dutch news media but also led to the development and fostering of Islam-as-threat frame within the press. After 9-11, Dutch journalists tended to make more associations between the issues of terrorism, Muslim immigrants, and immigration. Moreover, the country was shocked when the Dutch Muslims said that they understood the reasoning for the attacks, and some Muslim boys even danced on the streets of Amsterdam. Clearly, the Dutch perceived that there was more to Muslim immigrants than merely the socioeconomic liability. A perception of the difference in the two cultures started to emerge and Netherlands soon realized that it was not immune to global conflicts. There were an increased number of attacks on Dutch Muslims post 9-11 and, as I have shown earlier, slowly the attitudes between Muslims and non-Muslims became polarized.

The situation further worsened with Fortuyn's assassination in 2002, less than a year from 9-11. There was a huge public outcry in the Netherlands following the political assassination and this was evident not only through the presence of hundreds of thousands of people at the physical commemorative sites in the country but also through the outpouring of emotions on the condolence registers online. Each of these sites served as a vehicle for divulging political criticism, hatred, and resentment. Issues of immigration and integration took centre stage within these public expressions of criticism, with a large number of people expressing a personal sense of affinity to Fortuyn and proclaiming that 'he dared to say what they thought'. Later, such a display of political criticism and public expressions of hostility were also visible, albeit less pronounced, on the death of van Gogh in 2004.

Moreover, as I have shown earlier, in the wake of both these events issues of terrorism, immigration, Islam, and integration soon became intertwined within the Dutch news media. Furthermore, both these events – Fortuyn and van Gogh's assassination – exacerbated the perceived threat and fear of Islam that had emerged post September 11, 2001. Thus, the nature and focus of the public debate radically changed and the issues of multiculturalism, and the socioeconomic liability of immigrants, were overshadowed with issues of radical Islam and the war on terror – the large number of wake-up calls in the media by the neo-liberals warning the readers of the dangers of Islam being another case in point. In the wake of such issues, a large number of scholars even went on to say that the Dutch public debate on immigration and Islam became – to a large extent – a debate inspired largely by fear.

[90] See: Chapter 4 subsection – *Dutch politics post 9-11: 'terror and threat'*

Redemptive turn: the emancipation of Muslim immigrants [91]

Parallel to the perceived terror threat from Islam, another development was slowly taking shape within the public debate during this time. The key players in this development were Fortuyn and Hirsi Ali. Although Fortuyn was a vehement critic of Islam in general, he indeed articulated the oppressive position of Muslim women as a major bone of contention for the compatibility between Islam and the western liberal way of life. By highlighting the subjugation and oppression of women in Islamic circles, Fortuyn clearly problematized the repressive nature of the practices of Islam. However, it was Hirsi Ali who actually pinpointed this issue and casted it within an emancipatory lens. Hirsi Ali was given the emancipation portfolio in the second Balkenende cabinet, and from that position she advocated a politics of saving (with regard to Islamic women) not only by showcasing herself as an authentic insider on Islam but also through the movie *Submission* that she made along with van Gogh. The movie not only reinstated Fortuyn's critique but also recasted the criticism through the redemptive angle of 'these women must be helped'.

The focus in the debate shifted towards the oppression of women within Islam from the earlier focus on the perception of a clear identifiable terror threat. The sense of justification that Hirsi Ali's emancipatory politics provided had a significant impact on the public opinion. The articulation of the Dutch hostility and ressentiment towards Islam soon changed from 'there is a perceived threat' to 'not only is there a perceived threat but also their ideologies and holy book are fallacious for they promote the subjugation and repression of women'. Clearly, the politics of emancipation became a prominent theme within the public debate and the focus was now directed towards the redemption of repressed and subjugated Islamic women.

Free Speech turn: the values of Muslim immigrants [92]

However, Hirsi Ali soon left Dutch politics and the anti-immigration right-wing political arena was then predominantly occupied by Wilders. During this time, another important theme became pronounced within the Dutch debate on immigration and Islam – the issue of free speech. Although the issue was present within the public debate since as early as the nineties owing to Bolkestein's remarks, or when in 2001-02 Fortuyn articulated a staunch and overt critique of Islam, the issue of free speech slowly and steadily emerged with the assassinations of Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh.

Although both political assassinations played a significant role in the aftermath of 9-11, these assassinations were also framed as an attack on the liberal democratic right to free speech. Be it through Prime Minister Balkenende's and Justice Minister Donner's remarks or through the framing of the issue within the Dutch news media – the assassinations were also portrayed as an open attack on one of the most upheld democratic principles: the freedom of expression. Such a framing of the issue, either by politicians or in the media, brought the difference in sensibilities between Islam and Western values to the forefront of the public debate. The nature of the argument changed and, as I have shown, Islam was perceived as an ideology that was unable to accommodate for the hard fought western democratic values such as that of free speech. During this time, Hirsi Ali even proclaimed that the right to free speech should be employed as the right to offend Muslim fundamentalists.

[91] See: Chapter 4 subsection – *Fortuyn and Hirsi Ali: 'emancipation'*
[92] See: Chapter 4 subsections – *Van Gogh's assassination and Wilders' acquittal: 'the issue of free speech'*, and *The perceived incompatibility with Islam: the 'value debate'*.

Later, the issue of free speech took prominence in the aftermath of the movie *Fitna* and with the criminal charges filed against Wilders. As I have shown in my analysis, within the Dutch mainstream media the ensuing discussions and debates regarding *Fitna* were often framed around this issue. Because of the highly explicit nature of the movie's content, the societal focus was much more on the issue of freedom of speech rather than the movie's characterization of Islam. Moreover, there were even discussion as to whether Dutch public broadcasters had the right to show the movie; however, with the presence of video streaming sites such as LiveLeak and YouTube the discussion had little bearing on the outreach of the movie itself. At a certain level, the framing of *Fitna* in light of free speech even facilitated the electoral success of Wilders in 2010 and, as I have shown in my analysis, he was even able to garner support from the people who simply celebrated the ability of an individual to speak out freely within a democratic society.

Furthermore, the combination of *Fitna* and Wilders' explicit remarks finally culminated into his criminal trial, which was casted primarily around the right to free speech. When the court acquitted Wilders of all charges, the acquittal, as I have shown, was proclaimed primarily as a victory for the democratic right to free speech. Although Wilders did celebrate his victory, he also problematized the fact that in a western liberal democratic society, such as Netherlands, he should not have faced such a trial in the first place (Wilders, 2011b, 2011c, 2012). In this regard, he even argued for the futility of Article One of the constitution and advocated the scrapping of the Dutch hate speech laws.

What is clear from all these sociopolitical and cultural dynamics is the fact that the progression and nature of certain events led to the foregrounding of the difference in the sensibilities and values between Islam and the Western tradition. The public debate moved on from being simply about the socioeconomic liability of immigrants or the perceived threat. The issue was now a sense of incompatibility between the two cultures evident in the perceived difference between the two – in which Islam was clearly seen as being incapable of accommodating for justified liberal democratic ideals such as the right to free speech. The free speech turn, thus, made the issue of the difference in values and sensibilities between Islam and the western tradition prominent.

Political turn: the integration of Muslim immigrants [93]

To say that there was 'one' political turn within the public debate would be wrong. The issue of immigration was to a large extent always present in the Dutch sociopolitical landscape. Be it through the critique of Bolkestein, Fortuyn, Verdonk, or Hirsi Ali – immigration and the issues of Islam were clearly discernable within the political and mass media arenas throughout the trajectory of the public debate. However, as I have shown, up until 2002 the politicians were quite reluctant to interject immigrant issues within electoral politics. It was only the brief political success of LPF in 2002 that propelled these issues within the electoral agendas of various parties – evident through the fact that in 2003 Balkenende clearly articulated a harder stance towards immigrants and asylum seekers.

Moreover, over time various heirs of Fortuyn came up within Dutch politics with anti-immigration and anti-Islamic manifestos. The issues of immigration and integration were thus prominently present in Dutch politics since 2002. However, most of these parties enjoyed relatively little or no success at all. LPF, LFF, ToN, DPK, One NL, and PVN – all of these parties slowly became

[93] See: Chapter 4 subsections – *The perceived incompatibility with Islam: the 'value debate'*, *The liminality of the Dutch majority: 'integration'*, and *Fragile electorate and the anti-Islamic bandwagon: 'politics on Islam'*.

marginal players within Dutch politics. It was then believed that with the demise of these parties Netherlands would soon return to its tranquil and tolerant way of life (Brinks, 2005; Carle, 2006; Kessel, 2011; Vellenga, 2008; Vink, 2007). However, with the electoral success of Wilders things have turned out a bit differently.

The success of PVV in not one but two general elections has clearly showcased that anti-immigration and anti-Islamic right wing parties are here to stay. By highlighting and constantly reinforcing the difference in sensibilities and values between Islam and the western tradition, Wilders has definitely politicized the issue of integration to a larger extent than did any of his predecessors. As I have shown in my analysis, a state of liminality is clearly being felt on part of certain ressenting Dutch groups. The binary distinction of us/them has polarized the society and the public debate has come to be framed in terms of culture – the problem is one of cultural integration and not merely of socioeconomics and assimilation. Tolerance and integration are thus showcased as unfit parameters with regard to Muslim immigrants because within the discourse of the public debate the immigrants of Islamic decent are perceived as being incompatible with the Dutch way of life. The ressenting individuals thus argue that the cultural integration of these immigrants is neither possible nor feasible.

Furthermore, the predominant politicization of the issue is also evident within the growing discontent and hostility towards Islam in a large number of Western European countries, and parties similar to PVV are slowly gaining significance. With the rise of the anti-Islamic rhetoric within Dutch mainstream politics, evident in the electoral success of PVV, the issues of cultural integration of Muslim immigrants have indeed become a predominant part of the contemporary Dutch political landscape. The Dutch public debate on immigration has indeed come a long way. What started off primarily as a debate on the socioeconomic liability of immigrants has now become a debate focused largely on the politicization of the problems with regard to the cultural integration of Islam.

Summing up the turns

Every theme that was pronounced within each turn has come to characterize the discourse of the Dutch public debate on immigration and Islam in one way or the other. Whereas the public debate is about the socioeconomic issues on one hand, on the other it is also about the issues of cultural integration. The articulation of the public debate in terms of turns has clearly showcased that the debate on immigration operates within a multiplicity of issues – socioeconomic liability, terror threat, emancipation, value differences, and cultural integration – that have a substantial bearing not only on the nature of the debate's discourse but also on the debate's trajectory.

Furthermore, in addition to the multiplicity of issues, the turns within the debate have also highlighted the multiplicity of actors that are involved within the debate. On one hand, clearly Dutch politicians have a tremendous influence on the discourse of the debate, on the other hand news media also plays a significant role in the way issues and events are represented to the public. The act of framing van Gogh's and Fortuyn's assassination as an attack on free speech, the intertwining of the issues of Muslim immigrants, terrorism, and integration post 9-11, and the portrayal of Wilders' acquittal as a victory of free speech – have all had an influence on the discourse of the public debate. The influence of news media is clearly evident not only in the ways in which certain events and issues were represented to the public but also in the ways in which particular issues became more popular and pronounced within the debate's discourse.

Furthermore, the articulation of the turns in this section has also showcased the import and social shaping of social constructs that are embedded within the public debate. Free speech, tolerance, multiculturalism, Islam, and western liberal tradition – each of these social constructs has not only played a significant role in the social shaping of the debate but also has in turn been shaped and influenced by the debate itself. Although it is difficult to gauge the extent to which each of these has been influenced, it is indeed clear that these constructs have over time been (re)shaped at a certain level. For example, the court's ruling that Wilders' remarks were just barely within the limits of the exercise of freedom of expression not only showcases the fact that according to the court Wilders' did not violate his right to free speech but also signifies that his remarks are indeed at the very boundary of free speech itself – one can only say so much and no more. Thus, by highlighting the 'barely legal' aspect of Wilders' remarks, at a more intuitive level the court also demarcated the limits to the understanding and exercise of the right to free speech.

Another clear example is the social construct of Islam itself. Over time 9-11, political assassinations, political critiques, and news media coverage have significantly shaped the public perception of Islam within Netherlands – clearly evident in the changing nature of the public debate. This section has thus showcased that the sociopolitical and cultural dynamics of the public debate are not only shaped by the multiplicity of actors and issues but also by the complex social constructs that are embedded within it. Figure 4 marks the end of this section and provides a graphical overview of the turns within the Dutch public debate on immigration.

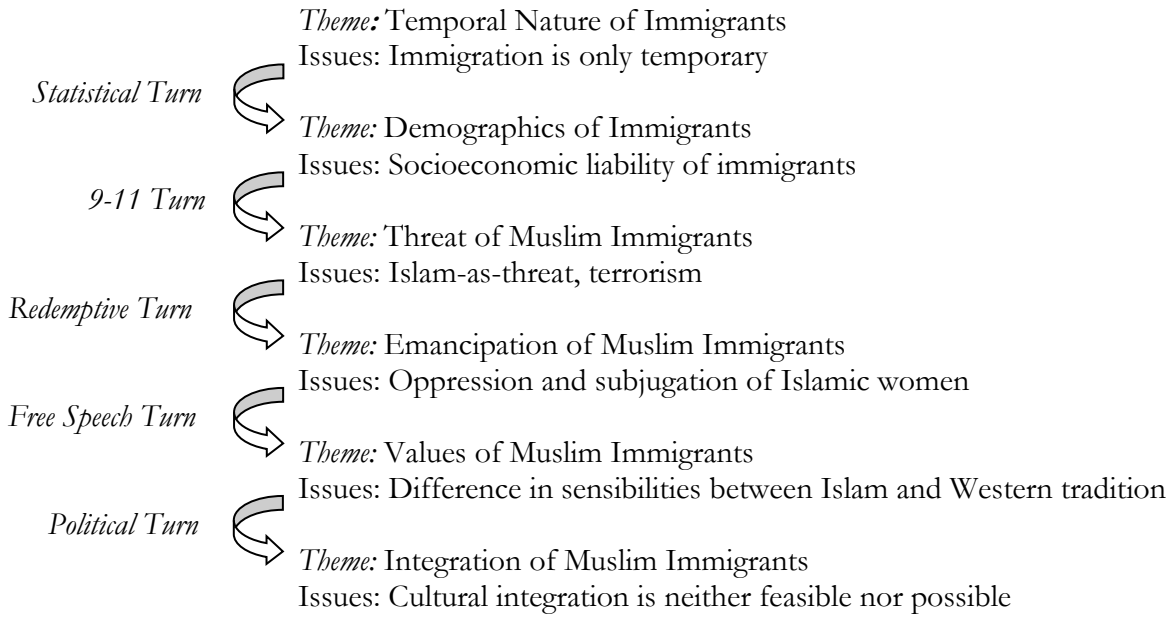

Figure 4: Turns within the Dutch public debate on Immigration

A Discussion: Mass Media, Collective Memory, and Liminality

The public debate on immigration – characterized by a multiplicity of actors and issues – seems close to reaching an impasse. As I had showcased in the *Introduction* to this thesis, this impasse is especially evident within the current perception of a deadlock with regard to a constructive dialogue between the

social groups involved in the debate. This thesis has showcased that the contemporary nature of the debate is prominently marked with the issues pertaining to the cultural integration of Muslims. As of today there is a societal perception of an incompatibility between Islam and the Dutch way of life within Netherlands. Within the presence of cultural polarizations, it can be inferred from the research in this thesis that in the public debate the issues with regard to Muslim immigrants are increasingly being represented as nodes of conflict rather than merely as problems (see Bødker, 2009). In this section, I will provide a short note on the implications of the nature of media 'representations' not only with regard to the public perception of conflicts within the debate but also in relation to the public perception of Geert Wilders.

There is a vast amount of scholarship dedicated to analyzing the role and significance of mass media with regard to its implications for political and social issues. The researches within this theme can broadly be categorized into two groups: on one hand there are researches that analyze the influence of political agendas on mass media representations and content (e.g., Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Luhmann, 2000), and on the other hand there are research works that provide an understanding of the ways in which mass media and ICTs can benefit the political governance within a country by facilitating communication at the grass-roots levels (e.g., Balkin, 2004; Raboy, 2003; Stewart, Mazzoleni, & Horsfield, 2003; Terranova, 2004). However, as I had shown earlier, over time a third strand has emerged within this research domain that has focused on the very impact of mass media on the social shaping and representation of conflicts and problems within a society (e.g., Bødker, 2009; Entman, 1993; Marsden & Savigny, 2009). It is within this third research domain that this thesis has highlighted two important points.

First, through the analysis in chapter five I have shown that the process of framing is clearly discernable within the representation of events in the Dutch news media.[94] Over time a large number of fragmented events within the Dutch sociopolitical and cultural landscape were framed in relation to the issues of cultural integration and Islam. Such framing of issues within one overarching theme leads to the synthesis of different bits and pieces of information into one broad generalization. Over time 9-11, van Gogh and Fortuyn's assassination, Madrid bombings in 2003, London subway bombings in 2005, and other events have increasingly been generalized in the news media with regard to a unified perceived terror threat from Islam – with 9-11 being an exemplar of this generalized theme. Moreover, this perception of a generalized problem statement or issue, largely facilitated by the nature of representations in the news media, lends not only a sense of correlation between various events but also imparts a sense of historicity to the issue itself. With media representations a variety of events are correlated, thereby conveying a sense of narrative around them.

In relation to the Dutch narrative on Islam, Bolkestein, Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali, van Gogh, and Wilders, amongst others, have indeed become cultural icons within the historicity of the public debate. A story is then woven around particular events and such a narrative then defines the progression of a conflict as understood by the citizens in a society. Indeed, as I have shown, the media representations of various events within the Dutch as well as the global landscape have not only significantly influenced the nature of the debate's discourse over time but also increasingly come to characterize the very progression of the narrative of Islam within Netherlands. Such a perception of a narrative, facilitated largely by framing within news media, clearly shapes and influences, what Halbwachs (1992) calls, the

[94] See: Chapter 5 subsection – *Colligating through framing.*

'collective memory' of a society. Halbwachs defined 'collective memory' as the memory that is shared jointly by a particular social group and through which the group formulates its own sense of identity (Ibid.). Clearly, it can then be inferred from the research in this thesis that the collective memory of ressenting anti-Islamic individuals within Netherlands, with regard to the perception of an inherent sense of incompatibility with Islam, is to a large extent influenced and shaped by the process of framing within mass media, particularly within Dutch news media.

Second, I have shown how the prominent and pronounced visibility and exposure created by mass media becomes the source of a new kind of fragility which creates a sense of vulnerability around a politician's public perception and political success.[95] With regard to Wilders, such vulnerability goes hand in hand with his perception of liminality. As I have showcased earlier, ressenting anti-Islamic individuals in the Netherlands discern a sense of liminality in relation to the perceived proliferation of Islam within Dutch society.[96] Whereas for most of the ressenting individuals this state of liminality is marked with an anonymous transitional period, for Wilders this state of liminality in essence characterizes his political identity. Over time the shaping of the public perception of Wilders' as a vehement anti-immigration anti-Islamic right-wing politician has largely been shaped by the nature of his critique and the portrayal of his actions within mass media and society.

In this context, the very identity of Wilders has come to depend on his state of liminality within which he predominantly emerges as a vehement and staunch critic of Islam. Moreover, the existing political fragility and vulnerability, as I have shown earlier, begets further societal and political performance on part of Wilders. Within this understanding, we can infer the complex nature of the relationship between Wilders' political identity and his state of liminality. To put it succinctly, the electoral success and popularity of Wilders has largely been facilitated with regard to his overt criticism of Islam, and it is the issue of Islam itself that lends identification to Wilders himself. Without this issue, and thus subsequently without the state of liminality, Wilders' political identity would be highly uncertain and fluid. Thus, to sustain his political identity in isolation to his state of liminality, Wilders' then needs to invest within a multiplicity of issues and not just the issue of Islam itself. In this regard, his recent political move to abstract out from the anti-immigration stance to a more generalized anti-European position can then be seen as a political investment towards the development of a more diverse political identity. The Dutch elections of 2012 will thus provide an interesting insight into the future of the political identity of Wilders and PVV. With this I conclude this section. The next section marks the end of this chapter and provides insights for the sociology of ressentiment by explicating its understanding in terms of Anthony Giddens' sociology of social practices.

Giddens and Scheler: Ressentiment as a Social Structure

> "Social practices may be studied, first, from the point of view of their constitution as a series of acts, 'brought off' by actors; second, as constituting forms of interaction, involving the communication of meaning; and third, as constituting structures which pertain to 'collectivities' or 'social communities'." (Giddens, 1993, p.110)

Anthony Giddens, in his book *New Rules of Sociological Method*, provides a set of sensitizing concepts through which we can understand and analyze social norms, practices, and structures. In the above

[95] See: Chapter 5 subsections – *Multimedia content: films and media presence*, and *Inflation of Information and the sociology of ressentiment.*
[96] See: Chapter 4 subsection – *The liminality of the Dutch majority: 'integration'.*

quote, taken from the same book, Giddens explicates the outline of a framework to analyze social practices in particular. He delineates three vantage points through which we can develop a nuanced understanding of social practices within societies. The first level *(*referred from here on as *constitutional)* is the understanding of social practices as being constitutive of a set of human actions. The second level *(*referred from here on as *interactional)* conceptualizes these practices as being comprised of forms of interaction that bring about a communication of meaning within society. Finally, the third level *(*referred from here on as *relational)* seeks to understand the social structures produced by these practices in relation to particular social communities and collectivities.

Whereas the first two levels have an analytics focus on the social practice itself, the third level lends insight into a particular outcome (social structure) of the constitutional and interactional aspects of social practices. The first two levels are self explanatory; however, the term 'social structure' needs further qualification. For Giddens, a social structure characterizes "two elements, not clearly distinguished from one another: the *patterning of interaction*, as implying relations between actors or groups: and the *continuity of interaction* in time" (Giddens, 1979, p.62). To put it succinctly, a social structure, as a product of social practices, is characteristic not only of the correlations within human interaction but also of the persistence of these interactions over time.

In chapters three and four I presented the analysis of ressentiment within the Dutch public debate on immigration. Through the analysis in these two chapters, I showcased that the Dutch discourses of actions, means, social hierarchy, social outreach, and social institutions are indeed symptomatic of ressentiment towards Islam within the context of Scheler's sociology of ressentiment. In chapter five my analytical focus was on the two interconnected social practices of communication of information and public association within sociotechnical societies. In this section I will contextualize the empirical findings of this thesis within Giddens' three-pronged sociological approach for two important purposes. First, I wish to provide a concrete basis to Giddens' theory and showcase the correlation between his sociology of social practices and Scheler's sociology of ressentiment. Second, I will establish that within the sociology of ressentiment, the construct of ressentiment can be understood as a 'social structure' (and not just as an emotion or a response to societal features) mutually constructed by social collectivities and societal factors.

The constitutional level: acts of communication of information and public association

At the first level, Giddens puts forth the understanding of social practices as being constitutive of a series of human acts. These human actions within the practices of communication of information and public association can easily be discerned within the analysis of the symptomatic emergence of ressentiment within Netherlands. Starting with Bolkestein, the Dutch debate has witnessed prominent human actors – Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali, Verdonk, and Wilders – who have voiced a strong critique of multiculturalism, immigration, and Islam over the past two decades.[97] Each of these individuals, as has been shown in this thesis, has played a substantive role within the Dutch public discourse on Islam. Another set of such actions has existed within the Dutch parliament and is evident from the analysis of the government and ministries' policy documents and reports on immigration and social welfare.[98]

[97] See: Chapter 3 sections – *Pim Fortuyn's assassination and the rise and fall of 'Lijst Pim Fortuyn'* , *Ayaan Hirsi Ali's criticism of Islam*, and *The 2nd Balkenende cabinet gets 'Verdonked' by Iron Rita*, ; and Chapter 4 section – *Geert Wilders' critique of Islam*.
[98] See: Chapter 4 subsection – *WRR's Immigrant Policy document of 1990: 'demographics and socioeconomics'*.

Additionally, as I have already shown, the news media has been a key player within the public debate and has clearly played a prominent and pronounced role with regard to influencing the public opinion.[99] Furthermore, another set of human communicative and associative acts can be discerned within the online realm either in terms of web-infographics, blogs, forums, and anti-Islamic websites or in terms of multimedia content such as the movies Fitna and Submission.[100] Sites such as YouTube have become arenas of resentment in which cultural and political issues are shaped and debated, and the increasing usage of VAAs by the Dutch youth further fosters the political mobilization of ressentiment.[101] The analysis in this thesis has clearly shown that the Dutch public debate on immigration and the symptomatic emergence of ressentiment towards Islam is indeed shaped and influenced by a vast array of activities by each of these actors. Each of these activities, in turn, has (re)shaped and influenced not only the public opinion on immigration and Islam but also the symptomatic emergence of ressentiment within Netherlands.

The interactional level: meaning-making within society

At the second level, Giddens conceptualizes social practices as forms of interaction that bring about the communication of meaning within societies. The focus here is on the societal process of meaning-making in relation to the human activities mentioned in the previous subsection. I will explain the relationship between the processes of meaning-making within Dutch society and Scheler's sociology of ressentiment in two interrelated aspects: a) the identification of a subject deemed responsible for a felt injury, and b) the perception of powerlessness and impotency within a justified attempt to bring about a practical change.

With regard to (a), for the people to consider particular conditions as social problems, these conditions first need to be defined as problematic (Best, 1995). Such problematization was clearly visible within the analysis of the Dutch public debate on immigration and integration. Each of the politicians – Bolkestein, Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali, Verdonk, and Wilders – clearly framed the problems of immigrants to a large extent in relation to the ideology of Islam.[102] Moreover, in the aftermath of 9-11, the assassinations of Fortuyn and van Gogh fueled the fears that Islam in the Netherlands is a possible source of violence and a threat to the hard-earned democratic ideals of free speech and tolerance.[103] In addition to the socioeconomic liability of the welfare state towards these immigrants, the cultural incompatibility of Islam with the western liberal way of life was also made prominent at this time.[104]

The analysis in the previous three chapters, especially in the fifth one, has highlighted the role and significance of news media and internet content in the construction and shaping of Islam as a problematic feature of Dutch society. The movies Submission and Fitna further portrayed the fallacious nature of the Qur'an and the violent tendencies of Islam.[105] Moreover, the analysis has clearly showcased

[99] See: Chapter 4 sections – *Of actions: why are you anti-Islam and what are you doing about it?* and *Of means: how do you know that you hatred is justified?* Also see, chapter 5 section – *Framing and Metadata: The Colligation of Information*.
[100] See: Chapter 5 subsections – *Blogs and anti-Islamic websites*, *Multimedia content: films and media presence*, *Online platforms*; and, Chapter 4 subsections – *Consuming Islam: news media and internet*, and *Mobilizing ressentiment: connecting the people at the individual level*.
[101] See: Chapter 5 subsection – *Political Mobilization*, *Multimedia content: films and media presence*, and *Online platforms*; and, Chapter 4 subsection – *Mobilizing ressentiment: connecting the people at the political level*.
[102] See: Chapter 4 section – *Of actions: why are you anti-Islam and what are you doing about it?*
[103] See: Chapter 4 subsections – *Van Gogh's assassination and Wilders' acquittal: 'the issue of free speech'*, *The perceived incompatibility with Islam: the 'value debate'*, and *The liminality of the Dutch majority: 'integration'*.
[104] See: Chapter 4 subsection – *The liminality of the Dutch majority: 'integration'*.
[105] See: Chapter 3 section – *Theo van Gogh's Submission*; and, Chapter 4 subsection – *The anti-Islamic movie: 'Fitna'*.

that such a framing of Islam as a social and cultural threat not only to the Dutch way of life but also to the social institution of democracy, led to the perception of a felt injury in terms of the cultural problems of immigration, multiculturalism and integration on part of particular social collectivities. Furthermore, it happened concomitantly with the framing of Islam as the subject responsible for these problems.[106]

With regard to (b), the analysis in the fourth chapter showed that the act of portraying the cultural threat of Islam in the backdrop of the glorified and hard-earned ideals of democracy (free speech and tolerance) helped impart a sense of justice to the ressenting individuals.[107] Moreover, such meaning-making processes also facilitated the emergence and fostering of the feeling of vulnerability owing to the exposure to the dominant Dutch system of multiculturalism and integration. Although the Dutch society is increasingly colored with anti-Islamic and xenophobic sentiments, I have shown in the fourth chapter that with regard to affecting a change within their perceived repressive state the ressenting collectivities have been mostly unsuccessful.[108]

Moreover, the analysis of ICTs in the fifth chapter has also showcased two important points within this context. First, the increasing exposure to decentralized information further facilitates the origins of ressentiment not only by providing a multiplicity of sources that can motivate it but also by fostering contact with the dominant value system.[109] Second, the increased outreach provided by blogs and forums may, in turn, not only foster ressentiment by nurturing an indirect tinkering with reality but also facilitate the processes through which ressenting individuals come together to provide a subjective basis for their beliefs.[110] Such features within the meaning-making processes in the Dutch society, as I have shown in this thesis, have led to the symptomatic emergence and facilitation of the feeling of ressentiment.

The Relational level: Ressentiment as a social structure

Finally, at the third level, the focus is on the outcome of the constitutional and interactional aspects of the social practice itself. Giddens emphasized the significance of the production of social structures which come about through the practices of collectivities and groups. He demarcated social structures not as systems or institutions in and of themselves but rather as social constructs that are produced and instantiated through the activities of human beings (Giddens, 1979). Through the last two subsections I have shed light on the correlation between Scheler's sociology of ressentiment and Giddens' sociology of social practices by explicating the nature and significance of human actions within the process of meaning-making in relation to the religion of Islam. In this subsection, I argue that the constitutional and interactional levels explained in the last two subsections lead to the production and emergence of the social structure of ressentiment within society. I will showcase this fact by arguing that ressentiment embodies and signifies the *continuous* and *patterned* interactions of ressenting social collectivities – the two aspects that Giddens' deemed characteristic of social structures.

With regard to the empirics of the Dutch case study, the continuous aspect of the social interactions of ressenting individuals is quite intuitive. Although the debate around Muslim immigrants

[106] See: Chapter 4 section – *Of actions: why are you anti-Islam and what are you doing about it?*
[107] See: Chapter 4 subsections - *Van Gogh's assassination and Wilders' acquittal: 'the issue of free speech'*, and *The liminality of the Dutch majority: 'integration'*.
[108] See: Chapter 4 subsection – *Living with paralysis: the anxiousness of Dutch society*.
[109] See: Chapter 5 section – *Decentralization Online and the Inflation of Information*.
[110] See: Chapter 5 section – *Outreach Amplification and Increased Mobilization*.

became a prominent national issue within Netherlands only after Fortuyn's assassination, starting as early as the eighties immigration had clearly been identified as a socioeconomic problem within Netherlands.[111] The problematization of Islam as a social and cultural threat began in the nineties with the critique of Bolkestein and has continued till date through politicians such as Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali, Verdonk, and Wilders. Through the analysis I have also shown that the news media has continuously been a key player within the emergence of ressentiment through its sustained focus on Muslim immigrants in the backdrop of the socioeconomic and cultural aspects of immigration, integration, and multiculturalism.[112] Moreover, such continuance of interaction was also visible within the online realm not only through blogs and anti-Islamic websites but also through the increasing uptake of the issue of Islam within mass media especially within the context of particular events.[113]

Ressentiment does not originate abruptly. Scheler while explicating the origins and facilitation of ressentiment clearly mentioned that ressentiment is characterized by a 'prolonged' perception of hatred, powerlessness and impotency in the wake of a felt injury done by an identified subject or abstraction. The continuance of the interactions within the Dutch societal landscape is not only characteristic of the prolonged nature of the hostility towards Islam on part of certain social collectivities but also, as shown in the previous subsection, of the prolonged exposure to the dominant value system that reiterates the powerlessness of these ressenting collectivities.

The other aspect explicated by Giddens signifies the patterned aspect of social structures. Giddens asserted that these structures are indicative of "'patterns' […within] social relationships" (p.61) that can be understood as "clearly defined 'tracks' of processes which feed back to their source, whether or not such feedback is reflexively monitored by [human actors]" (Giddens, 1984, p.192) Thus, patterning, within this context, refers to the correlations within the human interactions of generation of information and public association.

The analysis of news media and online content in the fifth chapter has clearly highlighted this patterned aspect through the trajectory and nature of expressions within mass media. First, the process of framing in the news leads to the synthesis of fragmented events with regard to Islam and I have showcased how the media, especially the Dutch news media, is characteristic of such a process of framing.[114] Increasingly over time, Muslim immigrants have been portrayed in a negative light, and the issues of immigration and integration are continuously prepped up on the news agenda especially within the context of the problematized nature of Islam or immigrants. Second, the advent of keywords on the internet correlates different pieces of information regarding Islam, further facilitating the colligation of information into a coherent narrative fostering the perception of Islam as a threat not only to Dutch society but to democracy at large.[115] Fitna, the movie, is a clear exemplar of such a practice of colligation. Moreover, although the Dutch public debate was colored with different focal points at particular times,

[111] See: Chapter 4 subsection – *WRR's Immigrant Policy document of 1990: 'demographics and socioeconomics'.*
[112] See: Chapter 4 subsections – *Dutch politics post 9-11: 'terror and threat'*, *Van Gogh's assassination and Wilders' acquittal: 'the issue of free speech'*, *Living with paralysis: the anxiousness of Dutch society*, and *Consuming Islam: news media and internet;* and, Chapter 4 section – *The Symptoms of Ressentiment: intolerance towards the intolerant.* Also see, Chapter 5 subsection – *Colligating through Framing.*
[113] Particular events: 9-11 (2001), El Moumni controversy (2001), Fortuyn's assassination (2002), van Gogh's assassination (2004), Madrid bombings (2004), London bombings (2005), Fitna's release (2008), and Wilders' acquittal (2011).
[114] See: Chapter 5 subsection – *Colligating through framing.*
[115] See Chapter 5 subsections – *Colligating through searching*, and *A case of colligation in practice: mashed-up Fitna.*

the analysis of the arguments of politicians such as Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali, Verdonk, and Wilders clearly showcases patterns not only within their own critique but also across each other's critique.[116]

Thus, I have shown that the ressentiment within Dutch society is characterized not only by the *continuance* of societal interactions over time by ressenting collectivities but also by the *patterning* within such interactions. Hence, it is clear that not only is ressentiment socially constructed and shaped by the societal actors and features but also that it is indeed a social structure in accordance with Giddens' sociology of social practices. Such an understanding of ressentiment, as a social structure instantiated and influenced by a particular collectivity, can lend two specific insights for the sociology of ressentiment with which I will conclude this chapter.

First, as I had stated earlier, one of the biggest problems of theorizing and analyzing ressentiment is the fact that although both Nietzsche and Scheler explicated the societal dynamics of it to some extent, within further scholarship the concept has mostly been dealt with at the level of an emotion, a feeling, a state of being, or as a potential source for activism (Abbott, 2006; Birns, 2005; Morelli, 1998; Risse, 2003; Solomon, 1994; Yankelovich, 1975). The understanding of ressentiment as a social structure can increasingly benefit the sociology of ressentiment not only by extending the understanding of ressentiment beyond a human emotion and feeling to its public expressions within a society but also by lending a concrete sociological basis for its analysis and articulation.

Second, although social structures emerge through continuous and patterned interactions over space and time, these structures then become a part of the societal landscape within which they emerge, further shaping and influencing the societal dynamics around human practices (Giddens, 1979, 1984, 1993). While doing research on ressentiment, I discovered that most of the scholarship dealt either with the emergence and origins of ressentiment within particular situations (Nordstrom et al., 1968; Reginster, 1997; Risse, 2003; Stringer, 2000; Yankelovich, 1975) or with the analysis of Nietzsche's or Scheler's conceptualization of ressentiment (Abbott, 2006; Meltzer & Musolf, 2002; Morelli, 1998; Reginster, 1997; Solomon, 1994). The understanding of ressentiment as a social structure can then provide insights from the sociology of information and communication that can promote the sociology of ressentiment beyond its focus on the origins (and indeed on conceptualization itself) to its impact on the societal dynamics around social, cultural, political, and economic issues through the analysis of the social structure of public expressions of ressenting collectivities.

As I had mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis, in contemporary societies ressentiment-inspired right-wing politics is increasingly becoming the "basis of relations between the State and the citizens, [and] between states and their people [… In] other words, the silent foundations that underpin governance" (Jiménez, 2008, p.18). Within such a skewed and complex model of governance, the understanding of the relationship between the social structure of ressentiment and its implications for the societal dynamics within a democratic debate can lend an insight into the multiplicity of issues and social groups that are at stake within the debate and this insight can increasingly benefit the facilitation of societal dialogues between the relevant stakeholders.

[116] See: Chapter 3 sections - *Pim Fortuyn's assassination and the rise and fall of 'Lijst Pim Fortuyn'* , *Ayaan Hirsi Ali's criticism of Islam*, and *The 2nd Balkenende cabinet gets 'Verdonked' by Iron Rita*'; Chapter 4 sections - *Geert Wilders' critique of Islam*, and *Symptoms of Ressentiment: Tolerance towards the Intolerant*.

IV

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