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**Seeing through the archival prism: A history of the representation of Muslims on Dutch television**

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*Citation for published version (APA):*

Meuzelaar, A. (2014). Seeing through the archival prism: A history of the representation of Muslims on Dutch television.

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## Introduction

### Allah in the Low Lands

I grew up in the late seventies and early eighties in a poor urban neighbourhood in the North of Amsterdam, where I lived in a tall block of apartments inhabited by lower-class Dutch families and immigrant families from Turkey, Morocco and Surinam. Although I had some sort of consciousness that my friend with whom I used to play was Turkish, and in that sense different from me, I never looked upon him as a Muslim. As far back as I can remember, I have never been very aware of the religious identity of the immigrants with which I shared my youth, and I was raised with the values of multiculturalism and anti-racism that were so self-evident in the Netherlands during these years. At the end of the eighties I moved to the North of the Netherlands, and entered a radically new environment. Now living in a middle-class neighbourhood, and attending an independent gymnasium, I became immersed in a sheltered life far away from the multicultural reality in which I grew up. And although the political debates about immigration and integration began to intensify during the nineties, and the liberal politician Frits Bolkestein launched Islam as a political issue, I was still not very conscious of the fact that a large number of immigrants were Muslim, let alone that I imagined that this could ever be conceived of as a problem. My framework of reference was constituted by the discourse of multicultural pluralism, and thus far I believed in the myth of Dutch tolerance. In my perception, the Netherlands was a progressive and tolerant country that lacked any breeding ground for overt racism.

Nowadays, I risk being called naïve or politically correct, and someone who has been blind to the deep divisions in society that were already percolating to the surface during the eighties and the nineties. Another decade has passed, and the country that I remember growing up in no longer exists. The first few years of the new century witnessed the traumatic event of 9/11, the rise and murder of the populist politician Pim Fortuyn (2002), the murder of filmmaker Theo van Gogh by a radical Dutch-Moroccan Muslim (2004), and the rise of the right-wing politician Geert Wilders, whose political program was by and large to counter “Islamization”. I suggest that it is not an overstatement to say that during the first decade of the second millennium, the Netherlands drifted into an identity crisis as a result of both immigration and globalization. During the 2000’s, issues surrounding integration, the nature of the multicultural society and the place of Muslims in Dutch secular

society have dominated political debate. For many years, these issues had a stranglehold on all parties of the political spectrum. Although the current economic crisis has pushed the issues of immigration, integration and Islam slightly to the margins of debates, they are still issues that are polarized and contested. The hardening of the debate about immigration and the rise of right-wing populism of the 2000's was not a particular Dutch phenomenon, and was also at stake in many other European countries, whilst hostility towards and fear of Islam was (and still is) even a global tendency. However, the speed at which the radical change of the political climate occurred in the Netherlands is quite puzzling. The way the issue of Islam hijacked the political debate in the aftermath of 9/11 and the murder of van Gogh was unsettling and alarming. Wilders' launch of his anti-Islam film *Fitna* (2008) showed that public display of hostility towards Muslims has ceased to be taboo in the Netherlands. Over the course of only a few years, the presence of Allah within our borders had become one of the most contested issues in the public arena. And against all my naïve expectations, during the last decade I witnessed the symbolic transformation of a Turkish friend from my youth into a Muslim.

The political debates about Islam and the place of Muslims in our society were fuelled by an endless array of images provided by television and other media. Often media coverage of Islam advocated a binary opposition of "Dutch" versus "Muslim", and presented particular stereotypes of the Islamic community. Television frequently depicted Islam as monolithic and homogenous, and did not often acknowledge the diversity of the Islamic community in the Netherlands. The tendency to reduce Islam to a handful of generalizations and emblematic representations was certainly not a Dutch phenomenon either. As Islam had increasingly become a globally salient issue, its iconography had developed into a repertoire of archetypical representations. Dutch television often tapped into this global imagery of Islam, and stereotypical images of Muslims circulated daily within the various television channels. Wilders' film *Fitna* – albeit not broadcast on television but only on the Internet – can be considered as a disturbing example of the recent trend to report on Islam from an essentialist point of view and to reduce Islam to a number of cliché images. Wilders has drawn on a vast variety of archival footage, both from the Dutch and foreign contexts, to advocate his message that Islam is an inherently violent religion, and for that reason should be expelled from the Netherlands. Iconic images of 9/11 and other terrorist attacks are juxtaposed with images of hate-preaching imams, demonstrating angry Muslims, and indefinite bloody images of violence against women, children and homosexuals. These images

have been totally ripped out of their original context and their juxtaposition has canalized their meaning to support Wilders' racist message that Muslims are by definition violent. Finally, if *Fitna* made one thing clear to me, it is that the cultural dynamics of the (global) circulation and dissemination of images raises many questions about television's use of images and its role in the creation of visual clichés.

Although the recent political polarization about the issues of immigration, integration and Islam in the Netherlands forms the background of the research I present in this dissertation, I do not enter the political minefield of the debate on integration (*integratiedebat*), and I certainly do not concern myself with the question of whether Muslims are integrated into Dutch society or to what extent they actually should. As a media researcher with a large interest in history, my initial concern of today's television coverage of Muslims can be summarized by two questions: (1) how has television constituted the Muslim as the (political) other?; and (2) how has television created the specific imagery that made Islam so recognizable? Both initial questions have a historical dimension, and it is my contention that a historical perspective can enhance the understanding of the recent cultural dynamics of the harsh stereotyping of Muslims. I am interested in how television has reported on Islam and Muslims in the past, and how this coverage has evolved over the course of fifty years, from the first arrival of Islamic immigrants from Turkey and Morocco in the sixties and onward to the current era. The question of whether television representations of Muslims are false or not is a question I leave aside. The aim of this research is not in the first place to expose misrepresentations, but rather to analyse the history of television discourse of Muslims and Islam, and to study the repertoire of images that has been used to visualize televisual stories about Muslims in the Netherlands. When I started this project and began doing historical research in the Institute of Sound and Vision, the Dutch national audiovisual archive *Beeld en Geluid*, the experience of doing archival research nurtured an interest in archival theory. Finally, this theoretical perspective has helped to refine my objects of research and my initial research questions to the ones I now present.

## **Objectives and Research Questions**

This dissertation traces the history of the representation of Muslims and Islam in the Netherlands through Dutch archived television programs. This historical investigation is based on material from the Institute of Sound and Vision, and takes

as its starting point the collection of television programs and items preserved and stored in this archive in Hilversum. The aim of this dissertation is twofold: to investigate the history of Dutch (public) television coverage of Muslims and Islam, and to analyse how the logic of both the archive and of the medium of television has created an (historically variable) iconography – various repertoires of images and visual clichés – of Muslims and Islam. The point of departure of this research is the idea that the archive of Sound and Vision has a history of its own, that on the one hand mirrors the changing perspectives on Muslims and Islam, and that on the other hand shapes the reuse and circulation of images of Muslims and Islam. The leading notion of this dissertation is the idea that the archive is an active player in media culture; it is my contention that the study of Dutch television history through the very archive that holds this history offers a new perspective on both the changing television discourses of Muslims and Islam, and on the cultural dynamics of the circulation and dissemination of images of Muslims and Islam.

Looking through the lens of the archive is not only a strategy to narrow down the corpus of my research to the programs of Dutch public television that have been preserved by Sound and Vision, it is also a way to deepen our understanding of the transformations of the television discourses of Muslims and Islam and to gain insights into the history of these transformations. For me, in order to answer my research questions, the logical first step is to look at the discursive history of the archive of Sound and Vision itself, for this archive reflects and reproduces the dominant language and values of the time. A focus on the politics of this archive and its practices of collecting provides information about the historical moments of transformation of the television discourses of Muslims and Islam. It is my contention that some answers to my research questions, such as how did the language of television to label Islamic immigrants change over time and when was Islam pushed into the national arena, can in the first place be found in the descriptions of broadcast material that Sound and Vision holds.

Besides, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the televisual logic that rendered Islam so recognizable and visible today, it is productive to analyse television history through an archival lens. The purpose of this particular archive is not only to preserve Dutch television heritage, but also to facilitate the reuse of this heritage for various broadcasting organizations. Television programs frequently recycled archival images to visualize their (hi)stories about Muslims and Islam in the Netherlands. In order to explore how the iconography of Islam has developed and transformed throughout the years, it is fruitful to examine the circulation of archival

images of Islamic immigrants on television and to scrutinize which images have entered the cultural canon. In addition, to fully grasp the historical dimension of the visual repertoires of Islam on television, it is constructive to not only look at the way Dutch television has resorted to its own history to visualize its stories, but to also study when Dutch television has tapped into transnational imagery of Islam. It is my contention that television's reliance on archival sources tells us much about the cultural dynamic that canonizes certain repertoires of images of Muslims and Islam. Since the archiving practices of Sound and Vision are aimed at facilitating the reuse of its holdings, the archive plays an active role in this cultural dynamic. So finally my quest to examine how Dutch television has constituted various repertoires of images of Muslims and Islam and has created visual clichés and stereotypes allows for a line of inquiry that gives central weight to the conceptual parameter of the archive as an active actor in today's media culture.

My theoretical and methodological choice to look at television history through the prism of the archive forces me to move away from more traditional approaches to media history and to move beyond the beaten paths of media historical research. I am interested in broad patterns of television coverage over the lengthy historical period of fifty years. Since my aim is to read television history through the archival lens, the corpus of programs that I examine is determined by the collection itself and by the archiving practices of Sound and Vision. This means that – although I concentrate on news, actuality programs and other non-fiction formats – I do not systematically differentiate between genres or between particular programs of the various broadcasting organizations and – maybe even more controversially – I do not look at commercial television. Because the corpus of this research is not defined by criteria that spring from an institutional- or genre-perspective on television history, the scope of this project might be controversial to those who prefer comparative historical analysis of for example genres or particular programs within distinct historical periods. Certainly this dissertation does not pretend to cover all corners of the complex and extensive history of television coverage of Muslims and Islam. Still, it's my contention that the specific case-studies that I present can contribute to a deeper understanding of how the history of Dutch television representation of Muslims and Islam is connected to the logic of the medium itself and to the logic of the archive that holds the historical broadcast material.

When I invoke the term televisual logic I refer to the recursive nature of the medium and its need to constantly visualize abstract stories. It is my contention that

a focus on television's inclination towards the compulsive repetition of certain topics and stories, and of certain generic images and archival (stock) footage to visualize these stories, is key to understanding the materialization and operation of stereotyped stories and images of Islam and Muslims. Compared to the bulk of literature on media logic and televisuality (such as Caldwell 1995), my usage of the term is thus somewhat narrow. Much has been written on television's particular modes of integrating moving images, sounds, verbal representations, and captions, on its liveness, its multimodality, and its complex temporal effects. With regard to its complex temporal modalities, I am mainly interested in television's capacity to visually juxtapose multiple times, events and places, and in its reliance on archival stock footage. I look at television, quoting Jacques Derrida, as a "sophisticated repetition machine" (1996/2002: 89). While television's modes of integrating sounds and images and television's journalistic conventions have constantly changed, its need to visualize stories and its reliance on archival footage has been a constant factor throughout its history. Finally, it is my assertion that the medium's imprint on the message is to a large extent caused by television's inclination towards compulsive repetition.

When beginning this project I was convinced that it would be counterproductive to set research restrictions in a too early stage. The lack of academic work on Dutch television history and on (the historical dimensions of) Dutch television coverage of Muslims and Islam initially pushed me to explore the archive quite freely, without rigid focal points and presumptions that would distract me from allowing the archival material to speak to me. I wanted to avoid the pitfalls of writing a teleological history and did not want to be guided too much by today's obsessions and concerns regarding Islam. So instead, I took the archive of Sound and Vision as a literal place of departure and assumed that specifications of research questions would emerge in the process of doing actual research. Once it proved to be constructive to allow the archive to also inform my work on a conceptual level, it became obvious how my two aims should be elaborated and given concrete form in distinct case-studies that reverberate together thematically and theoretically, but zoom in on specific research questions and revolve around different aspects of television's coverage and its visualization of Muslims and Islam. In each case-study the weight of the overarching theoretical principle of the archive is distributed differently in order to highlight the different aspects of my two interconnected aims: to study the history of television coverage of Muslims and Islam, and to examine

interactions between televisual and archival logic on the one hand and the emergence of certain visual repertoires of Muslims and Islam on the other.

## **Mapping the field**

In the last decade a large body of academic work on media coverage of Muslims and Islam has developed. Already in the decades before 9/11, international events such as the Iranian revolution (1979), the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Rushdie affair (1989), and the First Gulf War (1990) lead to an impulse among intellectuals to study the portrayal of Muslims in Western media and to scrutinize the negative images and stereotypes that circulated. This theoretical and empirical scholarship on Western coverage of Islam and the Arab world acquired a renewed urgency after 9/11, and during the last decade in which the polarized rhetoric intensified, an ever-increasing body of studies of the post-9/11 dynamics in Western media coverage of Islam has emerged. In this section, briefly sketching the academic context in which media coverage of Islam has been studied, I position my research within the field and elaborate on its relevance.

### ***Orientalism* and the construction of the Other**

Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) provides the classical framework for understanding the historical production of knowledge about the Orient in the Western world, and is an almost obligatory reference when taking up the theme of the image of Islam in the West. The publication of his seminal book marked the beginning of a period that has seen a blossoming of interest in the subject of the depiction of Islam in the West, and triggered on-going scholarly debates. Despite the fact that Said's theory of Orientalism deals with the Western construction of the Orient, and not exclusively with Islam, his work is an important starting point for sketching the historical academic context in which research about the image of Islam in the West has emerged.

In *Orientalism* Said bases his argument on the analysis of a wide range of Western academic and literary texts about the Orient (works of painters, writers, historians, linguists, travellers and colonial bureaucrats) and shows how Europe, since the time of European imperialism in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, has produced a hegemonic ethnocentric discourse of the Orient. His main argument is centred on the idea that European domination took not only political and economic forms, but also a cultural form. Referring to the work of Michel Foucault, Said argues that the

birth of the Orient was the result of a specific nexus of power and knowledge by which the West exercised its control over the East, and he defines Orientalism as “a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (3) and “a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between ‘the Orient’ and [...] ‘the Occident’” (2). So in Said’s work, Orientalism is the discourse that produced forms of knowledge of the Orient that were deeply implicated in the operations of power. Said describes a collection of key stereotypes of the Orient and argues that the Orient was often depicted as mysterious, exotic, irrational, backward, uncultured, barbarian, archaic, conservative, erotic, sensual, despotic, and inferior; whereas the West was constructed as inherently and essentially superior. In Said’s theory, the effects of the homogenizing and stereotyping of the Orient by the West were certainly not confined to the symbolic realm. The stereotypes served the power interests of the West and were used to manage, consolidate and legitimize its hegemony over the East.

Said’s work had a great impact and inspired many academics working in the field of post-colonial and colonial discourse studies to explore new avenues of research. The publication of *Orientalism* incited a heated debate about its arguments and method, and besides being praised for his groundbreaking work, Said was also criticized from across various disciplines. A range of critical assessments have pointed at omissions, ambiguities and contradictions in Said’s text and methodology (Poole 2002/2009: 29-31). Despite the fact that *Orientalism* is still a vigorously discussed text, it is nonetheless a very influential milestone in the field of cultural studies that has opened up important debates about the construction of the Other in Western contexts and that certainly has a continuing actuality. Said’s thesis is applicable to contemporary patterns of representation in the West, and for many researchers who study dominant media representations of the Other, and in particular of Arabs and Muslims, *Orientalism* is a source of inspiration that has never lost its urgency. Numerous intellectuals have taken up Said’s ideas and used his thesis to point to the resilience of Orientalist stereotypes and topoi, and to demonstrate that contemporary images have their roots in age-old ideas about Islam and the Arab world.

### **Islam, Muslims and the Media**

Once again, Said is a mandatory reference in any discussion of the research on media representations of Muslims and Islam. With his *Covering Islam* (1981, updated in 1997) – an analysis of US media coverage of Islam in the wake of the Iranian

revolution – Said set a benchmark for research in the field. In this study, he argues that Muslims in media representations are often associated with religious hysteria, militancy, extremism, anti-Western sentiments and terrorism, and that journalists and experts reduce Islam to a handful of generalizations and clichés. The bulk of the literature written after Said's text identify the same pejorative and negative themes associated with Muslims and Islam, and deconstruct the dichotomy between Islam and the West that is created by media and by scholarly publications, such as Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of the World Order* (1996). Early studies – dealing with the decades before 9/11 – focus on the representation of Islam in global Western mass media, often in response to events such as the Rushdie affair and the Gulf War, and reveal the primary stereotypes and homogenizing discourses of Islam and Muslims (for instance Hafez: 2000; Karim: 1997 and 2003). Also more localized approaches exist that study the representations of Muslims in national contexts (for instance Cottle: 1991 and Poole: 2002, on the representation of Muslims in the British press).

So although fear-laden stereotypes of Islam as violent and a threat to the West were already in circulation before 9/11, more recent scholarship has revealed that the pervasiveness and intensity of these stereotypes were enormously magnified by the events of 9/11, the terrorist attacks perpetrated across the globe, and the War on Terror. Recent research has focused on media treatments of terrorism and the phenomenon of media-generated demonization of Muslims and Islamophobia (for instance Nacos and Torres-Reyna: 2007; Morey and Yaqin: 2011; Gottschalk and Greenberg: 2008; Karim: 2002; Ismael and Rippin: 2010; Farouqui: 2009; Hoskins and O'Loughlin: 2007; Cottle: 2006; Poole and Richardson: 2006; Allen: 2010). Besides these studies of the global and US context, more research of various national and cross-national contexts has emerged (for instance Hafez and Richter: 2009 on German television representations; Saeed: 2007; Richardson 2004; and Petley and Richardson: 2012, on Muslims in the British press; Flood et al: 2012, a cross-national analysis of French, British and Russian television). These studies of media representations of Muslim minorities in the West have argued that the images and discourses relating to Islam and Muslims tend to be negative and hostile, that Muslims tend to be represented as un-Western and Islam as incompatible with Western values, and that these media representations can be considered as contemporary manifestations of Orientalist discourse that maintain the dichotomy of "West" versus "East".

### **Positioning this study**

Despite the wide range of existing studies on the issue of media coverage of Muslims and Islam, there are still some underexposed perspectives and blind spots in the current literature. The proliferation of literature on the representation of Muslims has hardly included systematic historical analysis. Some studies do make historical comparisons, but only cover a rather small amount of time. Besides the fact that the majority of studies so far lack a historical perspective, much research has tended to focus on print media. Besides, also in research that does deal with audiovisual media, the visuality of media discourses of Muslims and Islam tends to be underexposed. My systematic historical analysis adds a further element to the literature on media coverage of Islam, which is distinctive in both the ground that it covers, and the argument it makes. I shortly summarize the academic relevance of this research, and elaborate on the new perspectives it offers to the existing literature.

Firstly, my study responds to the lack of academic research conducted on the topic of Dutch media coverage of Islam. I situate my research in the tradition of the localized approaches to media coverage of Islam, and until now there are few publications that address the Dutch context. Besides Andra Leurdijk's study that addresses television journalism of the multicultural society in the nineties (Leurdijk: 1999), hardly any work has been done on the television representation of minorities in general and Muslims in particular. There are a few publications that do address the issue of minorities in the press (Van Dijk: 1983) and in media in general (Evers and Serkei: 2007; Sterk and Top: 2000), and there are a few articles that draw attention to the negative portrayal of Muslims in the Dutch press and on Dutch television after the Rushdie affair (Haleber: 1989) and after the murder of van Gogh (d'Haenens and Bink: 2007; Shadid: 2005). Recently, a thorough study of the image of Islam in the Netherlands was published – *Van Harem tot Fitna: Beeldvorming van de Islam in Nederland 1848-2010* (Poorthuis and Salemink: 2011) – but this study does not address television representations. So far no systematic analysis of Dutch television coverage of Muslims exists. This study aims to fill that gap.

Secondly, until now there are no publications on television coverage of Islam and Muslim minorities in the West that are the result of a systematic historical examination over such a lengthy period of time. My study is based on systematic and extensive research that runs from the beginning of the post-war labour immigration in the sixties to the recent epoch of anti-immigration sentiments and the War on Terror. It is my contention that a historical perspective on television

coverage of Muslims and Islam can give insight into how the different phases of immigration and settlement of Muslims in the Netherlands correspond to specific televisual narratives and repertoires of (archetypical) images. By turning the spotlight on the historical dimensions of television coverage of Muslims and Islam, and by scrutinizing both the transformations of narratives and imagery, and the repetitive patterns of coverage and the regularly repeated imagery, this study deepens the understanding of the emergence, transformation, resilience and re-appropriation of stereotyped narratives and archetypical representations of Muslims and Islam.

Thirdly, this research introduces a new conceptual parameter to the study of television history. By investigating the history of television coverage of Muslims and Islam through the lens of the archive, I take an unexplored path through television history and develop a new method for television historiography, which can also be relevant for media historians and media theorists who are not necessarily interested in media representations of Islam. The conceptual parameter of the archive as an active player in media culture can add a new type of study to the media studies research agenda, and can stimulate others to pursue a similar approach to media history. This conceptual parameter can also contribute to our understanding of the cultural dynamics of the ubiquity and circulation of images in the modern globalized and digitized media ecology. By using insights derived from archival science, I rethink television historiography and media theory, and reveal how the logic of the medium of television and of the archive put into circulation specific repertoires of images. And by doing so, this study contributes to a better understanding of the operating of visual stereotypes.

### **Some Key Concepts: Discourse, Cultural Identity and Stereotypes**

While I devote the first chapter of this dissertation completely to my main theoretical point of departure, the archive, I here elaborate shortly on some theoretical concepts that figure throughout this study; concepts that are very common and often used loosely in public and scholarly debates, without being defined and explicated. The popularity of the terms discourse, cultural identity and stereotypes stresses the need to clarify how one uses them. In the social sciences and humanities, many different approaches to discourse analysis and to the theorizing of cultural identity and stereotyping exist. By situating this research in the theoretical field, and by briefly explicating the theoretical traditions on which I build, I clarify my conceptual applications of these terms.

### **Foucauldian archaeology**

In this study, I draw on the Foucauldian archaeological paradigm of discourse. In his archaeological writings (I refer mainly to Foucault 1969), Foucault defines discourse as a system of “statements” that constitute the rules that define which expressions are discursively meaningful at particular historical times. An important theoretical premise in Foucault’s work is that discourse both actively constitutes the objects of knowledge and the social subject: both are the effect of discursive formations. So Foucault adheres to the social constructionist principle that both knowledge and truth are a discursive construction, and that different regimes of knowledge determine which statements are meaningful and true and which ones are not at specific historical moments. In Foucault’s approach, statements are always rare and scarce, since we have in principle an infinite number of ways to formulate statements, but the statements that are produced within a specific domain are rather repetitive. This means that of everything that might have been stated, relatively few things actually are stated. Foucault calls the system of statements the archive. So in Foucault’s hands, the archive is the set of rules that make it possible for certain statements but not others to occur at particular historical times and that define what the forms and the limits of the sayable are in certain periods (Foucault 1969 and 1978: 59).

The method to study the rules that determine which statements are accepted as meaningful and true in a particular historical period is what Foucault has coined “archaeology”. Archaeology is in Foucault’s definition concerned with describing historically variable “discursive formations” – the organized system of statements that have meaning relationally. The task of the archaeologist is to systematically investigate the archive system and describe discourses as “monuments” (1969: 155). What Foucault stresses here, is that archaeology is not an interpretative discipline: “It is nothing more than a rewriting: that is, in the preserved form of exteriority, a regulated transformation of what has already been written. It is not a return to the innermost secret of origin; it is the systematic description of the discourse-object” (1969: 156). So archaeology is in Foucault’s conception the description of an archive – the set of rules that define at a given historical period the limits and forms of the sayable – and thus the description of the manifest appearance of discourses: of things actually said.

Although Foucault’s scope on discourse is very broad – it covers the totality of discursive practices within a society, and Foucault tends to identify only one knowledge regime in each historical period, and thus leaves little space for a

possible co-existing of competing discourses – I suggest that his insights can be fruitfully employed to analyse archival and television discourse. In this investigation, I am interested in studying archaeologically the discourses of Islam and Muslims that circulate at particular historical times within the specific domains of the archive of Sound and Vision and Dutch public broadcasting. I will provide more methodological details in the chapters that follow, since Foucault's rather abstract theory does not give concrete suggestions for the analysis of empirical data. For now, I adhere to Foucault's overall methodology of archaeology, and aim to identify different historical discursive regimes of Muslims and Islam, and investigate how in these regimes the cultural identity of Muslims is structured.

### **An anti-essentialist notion of cultural identity**

In his well-known work on cultural identity, Stuart Hall opens with an introduction entitled "Who needs Identity?" (Hall and du Gay: 1996). By posing this question, Hall points to the paradoxical development around the concept of identity: on the one hand there has been a discursive explosion around the concept, while on the other hand the concept has been subjected to a severe anti-essentialist critique. Hall maintains that, despite this paradoxical situation, the concept is still both useful and unavoidable: "Identity is such a concept-operating 'under erasure' in the interval between reversal and emergence; an idea which cannot be thought in the old way, but without which certain key questions cannot be thought at all" (1996: 2). Since this study is written against the background of the eruption of public debates about identity in the Netherlands, and since it aims to investigate the construction of Islamic identities by public television, I briefly discuss the anti-essentialist paradigm of cultural identity – as advocated by Hall – which I draw on in this study.

In his work on cultural identity, Hall argues against any conception of identity that thinks of it in terms of a "stable core of the self" (1996: 3) or a "collective or true self hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves' which a people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (ibid. ). To avoid the essentialist connotations of the word identity, Hall has coined the notion of cultural difference. In his "Who needs identity" he explains this notion as follows:

Above all (...) identities are constructed through, not outside, difference. This entails the radically disturbing recognition that it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its *constitutive outside* that the "positive" meaning of any term – and thus its "identity" – can be constructed (ibid.: 4).

Hall maintains that identities are fractured and fragmented, and in a constant process of transformation, never singular, always subject to change, and constituted within discourse and representation: "Precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies" (ibid.). This conception of identity, as multiple and fragmented, as constituted in discourse and through difference, and as subject to historical change, can be found in the work of many other intellectuals working in the field of cultural studies and postcolonial theory, and operates as its dominant paradigm. I will not elaborate on all the variations that exist within this paradigm; it certainly does not describe a single theoretical stance or terminology. What is crucial for me, however, is that this conception of identity is compatible with my Foucauldian approach to the subject as constructed through discursive formations, and that this notion of identity directs attention to issues of representation, and allows me to investigate how public television has constructed and articulated the identity of Muslims.

Clearly, there is a danger that in invoking terms such as "Muslims", "Islam", and "the Dutch", one reinforces the homogeneity and essentialism that these terms connote in today's debates. I am intensely aware that these labels are never mere descriptors, and come laden with ideological baggage and discursive associations. At the same time, these terms are unavoidable, and I will not – for reasons of legibility – place them in quotation marks throughout this study to acknowledge this fact. When I use labels such as "Muslims", "Islam", "Islamic immigrants", "the West", and "the Dutch", I do not refer to stable categories of people or reified notions of religion, but I follow the language that public television has used to tell its stories, and the labels that the archive of Sound and Vision has used to make this broadcast material retrievable. So when I employ these labels, I do so in a critical way, aware of the fact that they often mask the heterogeneity of the people they claim to denote and are frequently used to underpin stereotypes and essentialist ideas about cultural identities.

### **Stereotypes as form of repetition**

Since this study departs from the Foucauldian concept of discourse and from an anti-essentialist notion of cultural identity, it necessarily rejects a notion of the stereotype as a misrepresentation of a given reality. While this study is influenced by the work of Said on the stereotyping of the Orient, Arabs and Muslims, I am aware

that much of the critique of Said's work is levelled at his application of Foucault's discourse theory and at the contradictions in his work that are the result of it. Various researchers have pointed out that Said is caught between a position of seeing Orientalism as a misrepresentation and one that insists that neither the West nor the East have any "ontological stability" (Said, 1987: xvii), and that a consequent application of Foucault would have excluded this dichotomy between distorted and true realities. In this study, I will not declare stereotypes wrong or false, good or bad, and I will not confuse stereotypes with negative images that could be replaced by positive images – if only because certain positive images are stereotypes. Rather, I view the stereotype as systematically implicated in the issue of repetition. It is useful here to briefly sketch the paradigm from which I draw.

In the fields of postcolonial and cultural studies, much work has been done on conceptualizing the stereotype, and several researchers have stressed the repetitious nature of the stereotype. A familiar paradigm for understanding the stereotype is conceptualized by Homi K. Bhabha (1990), who has characterized the colonial stereotype – through a rereading of Said, Frantz Fanon and post-structuralist and psychoanalytic theory – as a "fetishistic mode of representation" (81), that simultaneously articulates fear of and desire for the Other: "The fetish or stereotype gives access to an "identity" which is predicated as much on mastery and pleasure as it is on anxiety and defense, for it is a form of multiple and contradictory belief in its recognition of difference and disavowal of it" (80). Bhabha argues that in the process of stereotyping, that what is supposedly already known must nevertheless compulsively be restated and repeated: "The stereotype [...] is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place' already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated" (66). While the truth of stereotypes can never be proved – Bhabha rejects an epistemology that opposes representation and reality – this lack of proof does not eradicate the compulsive repetition of "the same old stories" (77).

In her *Declining the Stereotype*, Mireille Rosello (1998) takes up the work of Bhabha (and others, such as Roland Barthes and Richar Dyer) and directs attention to the formal structure of stereotypes, to their high degree of what she has coined "iterativity": the memorability, quotability and timelessness of stereotypes. Rosello maintains that stereotyping practices are both the cause and the effect of an alliance between time and memory that develops into a vicious circle: stereotypes are successful because they are memorable, and their memorability is directly linked to their timelessness, which in turn increases their memorability. Rosello contends that

ethnic stereotypes should above all be defined by their high degree of iterativity, and not by their ideological content: "I suggest that the identity of an ethnic stereotype is a very abstract quality, a formal characteristic that we could conceptualize as a level or an intensity rather than as content" (25). She looks upon the stereotype as a form of contamination, and compares the operating of stereotypes with the infection by bacteria of a general statement about groups, that turns this statement into an instantly memorable formula. In the next stage, the descriptive element of the stereotype – the content of the stereotype – appears to be the stereotype itself. However, she maintains, this is yet another "ruse of the stereotyping machine" (37): "Behind the smoke screen of what the stereotype says about a certain ethnic group, the identity and immense resilience of the stereotype resides in its apparently indestructible degree of iterativity" (37). So in Rosello's view, the most dangerous aspect of stereotypes lies above all in their formal structure.

I find Rosello's concept of iterativity useful to understand the repetitive nature of stereotypes. I am very much aware of the problem that, in order to address stereotypes, one is forced to repeat and quote them and thereby activate them. As Rosello phrases it: "I cannot quote stereotypes without acting in their favor" (38). I therefore want to stress that, when I assess stereotypes, I do not imply speaking from a superior position that allows me to casually expose and deconstruct the burdened words and images of the stereotype. Besides, I am fully aware of the risk that, by naming certain images and statement stereotypes, one reconfirms them. The reason why I find the notion of iterativity helpful to understand stereotyping, is that it allows me to direct my attention to the logic of the medium of television and of the archive of Sound and Vision, that causes and promotes the constant repetition of certain formulaic stories and images of Islam and Muslims. After all, I am not only interested in the semantic content of the stories and images that are compulsively repeated by television – in the content of television's "fetishistic" representations – but also in the media mechanisms that underlie the iterations of certain narratives, generic images and archival images. Finally, the concept of iterativity allows me to bridge the fields of postcolonial theory, of the stereotype and media studies. Before I progress to a structural overview of this dissertation, it is instructive to first provide a historical background of the settlement of Muslims in the Netherlands.

## Historical Background: A Short History of Islamic Immigration in the Netherlands

The Netherlands first came into contact with Islam as a result of their diplomatic and commercial involvement with the Ottoman Empire and their colonial rule in the Dutch East Indies. However, this contact was indirect and did not have any profound impact on the majority of Dutch society (Rath et al. 2001). As is true for many European countries, it was large-scale immigration that has resulted in a considerable Muslim presence within Dutch borders and that has caused Islam to develop into the largest non-Christian religion in the Netherlands. In this section I sketch the historical background of post-war Islamic immigration in the Netherlands. Although the presence of Muslims in the Netherlands dates from before the Second World War, it was only during the post-war period that the scale of Islamic immigration began to increase rapidly.<sup>1</sup> In the 1950's and early 1960's, small groups of Muslims entered the Netherlands; some were Indonesian and Moluccan Muslims who came as a result of the decolonization of Indonesia, while others were early immigrants from Surinam.<sup>2</sup> However, the emergence of Islam in the Netherlands was – besides this colonial and postcolonial immigration and more recently the influx of asylum seekers – most of all the result of labour immigration from Turkey and Morocco that began in the early 1960's and assumed vast proportions in the decades that followed. Thus, in this short historical overview, I mainly concentrate on the history of Turkish and Moroccan labour immigration and describe Dutch reactions to the growing presence of Muslims within the borders of the Netherlands.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Landman (1992: 19-32) for a detailed account of the pre-war settlement of Muslims in the Netherlands. From the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, representatives of the Indonesian elite had come to the Netherlands to study, and later also Indonesians from the working class had arrived and settled in the Netherlands. In 1932, they had founded the first formal Islamic organization.

<sup>2</sup> See Landman (1992: 32-37). Some of the Moluccan soldiers from the Dutch East Indies Armies (KNIL) who arrived in 1951, after Indonesia's independence, were Muslims. And some of the early immigrants from Surinam- only after its independence in 1975 the amount of Surinamese became very substantial- were Muslims. In 1956 the Moluccan Muslims had founded the second official mosque of the Netherlands in their camp near the Frysian village of Balk. The first mosque – the Mubarak mosque in The Hague- had been founded in 1955 by the *Ahmadiyya* movement- a missionary movement that had its origins in British colonial India.

<sup>3</sup> I follow the periodization of Rath et al. (2001) in *Western Europe and its Islam*. The authors argue that the history of the reaction of Dutch society and the Dutch government to the growing Muslim presence can roughly be divided in three periods. Because the scope of this book only reaches to the moment of its publishing in 2001, I want to add a fourth period that set in with the rupture of 9/11 that marked yet another turning point in the Dutch reaction to Muslim presence.

### **The initial years of Turkish and Moroccan labour immigration: 1960-1983**

As the post-war reconstruction efforts of the mid 1950's and the economic expansion of the 1960's had led to shortages of low-skilled workers in various sectors, the Dutch industry started to employ "guest workers" to fill the vacancies. In the beginning, these workers came from Southern European countries such as Italy, Spain, Greece and Yugoslavia, followed a few years later by people from Turkey and Morocco. The first Turkish workers arrived in the beginning of the sixties, and in 1964 the Dutch government entered into an official recruitment agreement with Turkey.<sup>4</sup> Moroccan immigration was set in motion in 1965 and a recruitment agreement followed in 1969. In the beginning, the numbers of Turkish and Moroccan immigrants remained low compared to South Europeans and only climaxed much later (Vermeulen and Penninx, 2000: 6-7). The oil crisis of 1973 marked a turning point in the Dutch economy and its employment situation. The borders were now closed to labour migrants and low-skilled immigrants were massively made redundant. However, the scope of immigration from Turkey and Morocco did not decrease. On the contrary, the number of Turks and Moroccans kept growing, mainly as the result of family reunification that reached its zenith in 1979 and 1980 (ibid: 7). The final years of this period were characterized by a severe economic depression (1979-83) and massive unemployment.

During these initial years, the attitude of the Dutch government was determined by the idea – of both the government and many of the foreign workers themselves – that labour immigration was of a temporary nature. During the 1960's, the government did not implement any structural policy, avoided the term "immigrant", and rather spoke of "guest worker" to stress the temporality of their stay. This view was reflected in the first two policy papers published in 1970 and 1974, the *Memorandum on Foreign Workers* and the *Memorandum in Reply*. The government recognized in these papers the fact that Dutch industry was in structural need of foreign workers, but stated that the Netherlands should nevertheless not be considered an immigration country (Shuster 1999: 183).<sup>5</sup> However, in these years the tension between the fiction of temporality and the reality of an actual long-term presence of immigrants started to increase and contributed to the urgency to

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<sup>4</sup> They came from Germany and Belgium, where the recruitment of Turkish workers had started earlier. Until 1966, large numbers of them came through unofficial channels. See for more details: Vermeulen and Penninx (2000: 154-155).

<sup>5</sup> Despite the fact that already from the early sixties immigration numbers had been higher than emigration numbers. Post-colonial immigrants- Moluccans, Indonesians and Surinamese- were called "rijksgenoten" and "repatrianten".

formulate a national immigration policy.<sup>6</sup> In 1979, the Advisory Council on Government Policy (WRR) advised the government to acknowledge that the idea of temporariness was not realistic, and published a proposal for a general policy for immigrant minorities entitled *Ethnic Minorities*.<sup>7</sup> This report was a turning point and finally, between 1979 and 1983, a national immigration policy was formulated that was implemented in 1983 and that became known as “minority policy”.

During these first two decades, there was no significant awareness that with the arrival of Turkish and Moroccan guest workers a new religion had also entered the Netherlands. The belief in the temporariness of their stay went hand in hand with the idea that Islam was brought to the Netherlands as cultural baggage of the workers that would soon be taken back to their home-countries or would fade away as a result of their assimilation into Dutch society (Sunier and van Kuijeren 2002: 144). During these years there was no concrete policy to facilitate Muslims to maintain their religious identity. Some employers arranged prayer rooms within the business for their Islamic workers, but outside the work environment few things were done.<sup>8</sup> After objections to this void of various pressure groups, the administration of Joop den Uyl began to research the possibility of giving financial support for places of worship and activities during Islamic festivals. In the following period, some facilities were made available: in 1975 the first Turkish mosque was opened in Almelo<sup>9</sup>, in 1976 a grant scheme for houses of prayer was announced, and in 1977 the government legalized slaughter according to the Islamic rite (Rath 2001: 29-32). At the same time, the amount of Islamic immigrants was rapidly growing and family reunion took place on a large scale. With the arrival of women and children, religion gained importance in the daily life of the immigrants and Islam became more visible. Religion proved to be an important mobilizing force for Turks and Moroccans and they began to press for recognition of their religion, and began to develop their own institutions by appealing to the freedom of religion that was guaranteed by the Dutch constitution. But still there was no question during these years of Islam being

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<sup>6</sup> The urgency was also caused by the train hijackings of Moluccan youth in the mid-seventies and by the influx of large numbers of Surinamese from 1973 onwards. See: van den Berg-Eldering (1986: 53) and Vermeulen and Penninx (2000: 20).

<sup>7</sup> *Ethnische Minderheden*, WRR, 1979.

<sup>8</sup> The 1970 *Memorandum on Foreign Workers* only mentioned Islam slightly and the related 1974 *Memorandum in Reply* did not devote a single word to religious facilities. See Rath et al (2001: 29)

<sup>9</sup> With financial support from the government in accordance with the Church Building Subsidy Act. See Rath et al (2001: 32)

integrated among the Dutch “pillars”.<sup>10</sup> And although the 1979 WRR report *Ethnic Minorities* was a turning point in the attitude of the government, the breakthrough of the institutionalization of Islam only came in the eighties.

### **“Minority policy” and the gradual institutionalization of Islam: 1983- 1989**

The implementation of the national immigrant policy in 1983, under the heading of “minority policy”, was the official recognition that the Netherlands had become an immigration country and that the guest workers that had settled here in the sixties and seventies were to stay. The minority policy was directed at a number of target groups which were considered to be in danger of becoming marginalized; among these were the guest workers, the Moluccans, the Surinamese, the Antilleans, refugees and asylum seekers. The goal of the minority policy was to prevent and fight the process of minority formation, and to realize equal participation in the areas of labour, education and housing (Vermeulen en Penninx, 2000: 20). The formula “integration with the preservation of identity” (*integratie met behoud van eigen identiteit*) summarized the official policy concerning the position of ethnic minorities in society. The emancipation of these groups had to be supported by granting them the right to live according to their own backgrounds. So the minority policy was focused on fighting the deprivation of minorities and promoting a tolerant pluralism. The legal status of immigrants was consolidated, and in 1985 immigrants who had (legally) resided here for more than five years were granted active and passive rights to vote in municipal elections. And although the objective was to limit immigration by a restrictive admission policy, the immigration number of Moroccans and Turks continued to rise as a result of family reunion and moreover of marriage immigration (ibid: 7). During this same period, unemployment continued to rise drastically due to the deep economic crisis.

As cultural background had now become a relevant factor in integration politics, the climate became favourable for the growth of Islamic organizations; they were considered to function as bridges between individuals and society and they were recognized as potential partners in the implementation of the minority policy (Sunier and van Kuijeren 2002: 148) Since religious diversity – of all cultural diversity

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<sup>10</sup> The Dutch church-state model - pillarization (*verzuiling*)- shaped Dutch society and its political landscape from the 1920s until the 1960s. During these years, civil society consisted of a Catholic and a Protestant pillar, and a Socialist movement and a Liberal sphere. These ideological blocks determined the political relations and fragmented the Dutch population. The pillars ran through all classes. Each pillar had their own political parties, trade unions, schools, universities, media and other associations. According to Marcel Maussen, pillarization did not play a crucial role in shaping the development of Islam in the Netherlands. See: Maussen (2012).

existing in the Netherlands – was traditionally most institutionalized in the past in the Dutch system of pillarization, Islamic immigrants started to make use of the principles of this system (or what was left of it).<sup>11</sup> In 1986, the Dutch Muslim Broadcasting Service became part of the subsidized pillarized broadcasting system. And in 1988, the first Islamic primary schools were founded (Rath et al. 2001: 82-84). So gradually, Islam became institutionalized.

During these years, Muslim presence began to attract notice and several political debates about *halal* slaughter and the headscarf took place (ibid: 59-61). The right-extremist Centre Party had discovered the Islamic identity of immigrants and presented it as opposed to Dutch culture (Van Koningsveld and Shadid 1989: 135-39). But despite this, anti-foreigner and anti-Muslim sentiments were not widespread. On the contrary, a broad movement against discrimination and racism emerged and all political parties took a clear stance against the Centre Party, particularly after it won 9 per cent of the votes in a local election in the town of Almere in 1983 (Vermeulen en Penninx 2000: 18). Towards the end of the eighties, the lenient attitude of the government towards the preservation of cultural identities of immigrants came under pressure. In 1989, another WRR report stated that the integration of minorities was bound to fail, partly due to the government policy that was too much focused on “integration with the preservation of identity”. This WRR report led to a new immigration policy, which was yet another turning point in the government’s attitude towards immigrants.

### **New policies of integration and the hardening of the Dutch attitude: 1989-2001**

The 1989 WRR report *Allochtonenbeleid* stated that the integration of *allochtonen* had not been successful.<sup>12</sup> It therefore recommended that the government should give more emphasis to integration through work and education and to develop settlement programs for newly arrived immigrants (Vermeulen and Penninx 2000: 21). These recommendations were incorporated into the new government policy. The government started to demand more participation and integration from minorities, and started to address them as individuals instead as groups. In what Baukje Prins (2000) coined the “new realism” of the nineties, integration became the central

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<sup>11</sup> Although Dutch society had de-pillarized since the sixties, the Dutch school system and public broadcasting persisted to be pillarized.

<sup>12</sup> The word “*allochtoon*” had been coined in 1971 by the sociologist Hilda Verweij-Jonker. Baukje Prins argues that the replacement of the term ethnic minorities by *allochtonen* had an important meaning: the word ethnic minorities stresses the group/ the collective, while the word *allochtoon* stresses the individual and individual responsibility. See Prins (2000: 12-13).

concept of the government's policy, and its focus shifted towards the assimilation of immigrants to Dutch standards. Despite the fact that the new integration policy wanted to move away from the "softness" of the eighties, and despite the shift in focus from individual to group, and from welfare to the labour market, the main objective of the policy remained the same as in the eighties: to improve the weak socio-economic position of ethnic minorities (Vermeulen en Penninx 2000: 4). In 1998, the government installed settlement programs (*inburgeringsprogramma's*) for newcomers. Newcomers had to sign a contract with the Dutch government and were forced to learn the Dutch language and to become familiar with the history and the values of Dutch society. Again, integration was the main aim of these settlement programs.

In this period, the public and political debate on immigration hardened. Increasingly more Dutch thought there were too many foreigners in the Netherlands and their tolerance began to decline. Besides, (international) events such as the Rushdie affair in 1989 and the Gulf War in 1990 aroused anti-Islamic sentiments. Suddenly large sections of Dutch society realized that a significant group of Muslims was living among them and this generated a fundamental debate about the place of Islam in the Netherlands (Rath et al 2001: 37).<sup>13</sup> Over the course of the nineties, Islam was increasingly conceived of as a problem. In 1991, conservative liberal politician Bolkestein took the lead in the promotion of a hostile attitude towards Islam. He stated that the "backward" Muslim culture was a threat to European civilization and he extended this fear to Muslim immigrants in the Netherlands. According to Bolkestein, Islam was not compatible with European liberal values such as freedom of speech, the separation of church and state and tolerance (Moors 2007: 77). A few years later, the liberal politician Fortuyn published a book called *Against the Islamization of our Culture*. He also called Islam a backward culture and perceived Islam as a threat to Dutch identity (van Nieuwkerk 2004: 232). Finally, in 2000, the prominent social democrat Paul Scheffer published the article "The Multicultural Drama" (*NRC Handelsblad*, 29 January), in which he declared the multicultural society bankrupt, and in which he stated that integration had failed. He considered Islam as an important reason for this failure.

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<sup>13</sup> One of the results of the Rushdie affair in the Netherlands was the foundation of the first national Islamic organization- *Islamitisch Landelijk Comité*- that publicly repudiated and condemned Khomeini's fatwa. See Sunier (1995: 189).

### **The assumed failure of integration and the Dutch “Islam debate”: 2001- 2010**

At the beginning of the new millennium, a range of extreme events shook up and seriously disturbed the country and the debate on integration and multiculturalism became extremely polarised in these years and began to centre on the issue of Islam. The Al Qaeda attacks of 9/11 (2001) pushed the topics of Islam and multiculturalism to the core of Western European politics, and fuelled a global fear of Islamic terrorism. Particular traumatic events within Dutch borders – the murders of Fortuyn (2002) and van Gogh (2004) – activated and aggravated the negative perceptions of multiculturalism and Muslims, which had already surfaced in the nineties. Scheffer’s article hit a nerve, and various politicians and opinion makers began to openly challenge multiculturalism. The rise of the populist politician Fortuyn, who made harsh statements about the defeat of multiculturalism and the “Islamization” of Dutch society, caused much confusion within the political elite, who displayed uncertainty about how to react adequately. In 2003, amid the political turmoil after the murder of Fortuyn by an extreme leftist, a new official government policy was introduced – the Integration Policy New Style – that completely revolved around encouraging common citizenship based on common norms and values (Buijs 2009: 428). In 2003 and 2004, a special parliamentary commission (*commissie-Blok*) investigated Dutch integration politics and concluded, against the current, that there had been considerable successes in many domains and that integration had at least partly succeeded. But despite these conclusions, the image of total failure of integration prevailed and the idea that multicultural policy had become a multicultural drama predominated in these years (Buijs 2009: 427).<sup>14</sup>

In this decade, the debate on integration focused almost entirely on Muslims and Islam. In particular after the murder of van Gogh by an extremist Dutch Moroccan on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 2004, “the Islam debate” erupted in full force. Van Gogh was murdered for directing the film *Submission* (2004), that was written by the liberal MP and outspoken proponent of Muslim women’s rights, Ayaan Hirsi Ali. The film was a critique of the position of women in Islam, and it depicted the nude body of a young woman, wearing a transparent veil, with texts from the Quran written on her naked skin. *Submission* caused great controversy, Hirsi Ali was forced into hiding, and the murder of van Gogh which followed caused severe panic and set off a series of reactions, such as violations of Islamic schools and mosques (Eyerman 2008: 1). The murderer, Mohammed B., turned out to be a member of a

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<sup>14</sup> See for a more detailed overview of the debate on integration and of the active players in this debate, in particular of the “integration pessimists”: Lucassen and Lucassen (2011).

group of radicalized Dutch Muslims, called the *Hofstadgroep*. Consequently, the country was confronted with the new phenomenon of the homegrown terrorist (Buijs 2009: 422). In the years that followed, the liberal politician Wilders hijacked the political debates on integration and Islam with his fight against the “Islamization” of the Netherlands, and with his many provocations, of which his film *Fitna* was most notorious. The Dutch Islam debate escalated, its tone became pernicious, and the debate was often framed as a war of civilizations. Islam became associated with backwardness and considered inherently incompatible with the core values of Dutch society that were imagined as rooted in the tenets of the Enlightenment. Finally, the debates on integration, Islam and the Dutch cultural identity reflected the severe confusion that had taken hold of the country during this decade.<sup>15</sup>

### **Outline of the Dissertation**

Chapter 1 introduces the theoretical body of work on the archive that has informed this study. I conceptualize an epistemology of the archive, inspired by the philosophy of Michel Foucault, Jaques Derrida and by the work of various archival researchers. I investigate the stakes of the “archival turn” (Ann Laura Stoler 2002) that took place in the humanities and social sciences. I examine the current concerns with the politics of the archive and with the relationship between the archive and public memory, and focus more specifically on the audiovisual archive, and question the status of the archive in our current visual and digital culture. This chapter provides the theoretical framework that informed my research in the archive of Sound and Vision and that has guided my analysis of its collection of archival material of Muslims and Islam in the Netherlands. Finally, this chapter indicates precisely how I look at my object of research through the prism of the archive.

Chapter 2 presents a general overview of the history of television coverage of Islam and Muslims on Dutch public television through the scope of the archiving practices of Sound and Vision. I first provide a short biography of the archive of Sound and Vision and describe its selection and retention policies throughout the years, I discuss the practice of archival description, and show that Sound and Vision’s archiving practices spring from its function as a company archive for various broadcasting organizations, and largely result from the archive’s task to facilitate

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<sup>15</sup> See for extensive analyses of the recent history of the Netherlands and of the causes and consequences of traumatic events such as the murder of van Gogh: Buruma (2006), Sniderman and Hagendoorn (2007), Lechner (2008), Eyerman (2008).

reuse for these organizations. This results in an elaboration of the method that I use to navigate television history. From there, I trace the programs and items that have been tagged with the keywords “Islam” and “Muslims” through five decades of television history. I identify the frequencies of coverage, thematic patterns of coverage, and (recurrent) images used to illustrate the stories. This chapter reveals what stories and repertoires of images of Muslims and Islam television has perpetuated throughout five decades.

Chapter 3 provides an analysis of the television coverage of the rituals of Islam. Since the recurrent nature of religious rituals goes hand in hand with continual and repeated television coverage of these rituals, a focus on the coverage of these rituals shows how Dutch public television has framed the encounter between Muslims and Dutch society throughout five decades. I first sketch the conceptual paradigm of religion and rituals from which I draw, and then account for television’s fascination for these rituals and for the cyclically recurring coverage of these rituals. Thereafter, I present two case-studies: in the first part of the chapter I trace the television coverage of Ramadan and the Festival of Fast-Breaking; and in the second part I trace the coverage of the Festival of Sacrifice and of *halal* slaughter. I investigate the programs and items on the level of their themes and frameworks of reference, and on the level of their visual components.

Chapter 4 presents an analysis of two iterating archival images: images from an episode of *Televizier* (1969) about the recruitment of Moroccan guest workers, and images of demonstrating Muslims during the Rushdie affair (1989) in the Netherlands. This chapter departs from the idea that the archive of Sound and Vision is an enormous reservoir of images that are constantly available for reuse, and it examines how two sequences of images have been canonized by television’s constant repetition and become part of cultural memory. Both images have been recycled frequently and have often been employed as visual illustrations of crucial moments in the history of Muslim presence in the Netherlands. I first sketch the constructivist paradigm of cultural memory which I draw from, and further theorize the recursivity of the medium of television. Then I present two case studies: in the first part of the chapter I analyze the case of the images of the recruitments and in the second part I turn towards the case of the images of the Rushdie affair. I investigate how these images have been re-contextualized over and over again, I examine what stories and images they have been attached to at different historical moments, and I scrutinize how television’s activations of these archival images has retrospectively reframed the past.

Finally, the Coda provides a final case-study of the three part television series *Land of Promise* (2014), that centres on post-war European immigration history and that has been constructed out of archival material from Sound and Vision and several other European archives. Through an analysis of this series, I further reflect on the televisual logic of compiling stories from archival material. What archival footage has the series selected for circulation and what (hi)stories are being told by the juxtaposition of archival footage? How is the past articulated through its selection of archival footage? At the expense of what other images? Finally, in the coda I recapitulate some of the central issues that this dissertation revolves around, reflect on the televisual logic of compiling stories from archival material, and raise some questions for further research.